EDMUND OLIVER.

BY

CHARLES LLOYD.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

In loving thou doſt well, in paſſion not,
Wherein true love conſiſts not; love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his ſeat
In reaſon, and is judicious, is the ſcale
By which to heavenly love thou may'ſt aſcend.

MILTON.

VOL. I.

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1798.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO

HIS FRIEND

CHARLES LAMB,

OF THE INDIA-HOUSE,

THIS TALE

IS INSCRIBED

BY

CHARLES LLOYD.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages were written with the deſign of counteracting that generalizing ſpirit, which ſeems ſo much to have inſinuated itſelf among modern philoſophers.

I think I can perceive, in the introduction of concubinage, in the rejection of * cohabitation, and in the character of that indefinite benevolence, which would reſpect the

* See Mr. Godwin's eſſay on this ſubject in the Enquirer.

the maſs of exiſtence without addreſſing its operations patiently to parts of that maſs, principles, that would deſtroy the tranquillity of ſociety, that, by means of annihilating all the dear "charities of father, ſon, and brother," would at laſt lead to a callouſneſs that ſpurns at all affections, to a mad ſpirit of experiment, that would eradicate all the valuable feelings of man's nature.

I believe, that the domeſtic connections, which are only coeval with the exiſtence of marriage, are the neceſſary means of diſciplining Beings, at firſt merely ſentient, to a rational and enlarged benevolence.

lence. The human mind never will be led to intereſt itſelf with regard to a *whole*, except it have been firſt excited by *palpable parts of that whole*, which have addreſſed themſelves to the wants and deſires of its conſtitution——this opinion muſt be abandoned, if we adopt the notion, *that, cohabitation is an evil*; and that it were well, did we receive no bias towards individuals from the inſtitution of marriage, and its conſequent relations.

In the character of Gertrude I have endeavoured to portray a woman of warm affections, ſtrong paſſions, and energetic intellect, yielding herſelf to theſe looſe and declamatory

declamatory principles, yet at the ſame time uncorrupted in her intentions, unfortunate from error, and not from deliberate vice.

Edmund Oliver is a character of exceſſive ſenſibility, and impetuous deſires, tamed down by diſappointment to that evenneſs of temper, and ſubduedneſs of will, which may enſure all the comforts this ſtate of exiſtence is capable of affording. I do not conſider myſelf reſponſible for any ſentiments or expreſſions, which were neceſſary to the developement of his character, in the courſe of his diſcipline—I am excluſively anſwerable for the Being I leave him, and for the

the ſentiments which are expreſſed in Charles Maurice's letters, which are one cauſe of his reformation, and gradual return from the ſlavery of paſſion to reaſon and manly fortitude.

With regard to the narrative, I have only introduced circumſtances, as they might aſſiſt the conception of the characters—I have therefore towards the latter part of the work wholly omitted the detail of events—events which, as the perſons, who are concerned in them, are no longer actuated by violent emotions, it would be difficult to render ſubſervient to the developement of diſpoſition.

The

The incidents relative to the Army were given me by an intimate friend, who was himſelf eye-witneſs to one of them, and can produce teſtimony to the truth of the other two.

CHARLES LLOYD.

EDMUND

EDMUND OLIVER.

LETTER I.

EDMUND OLIVER
TO
ELLEN OLIVER.

London, August.

ESTRANG'D as I have long been from her, how ſhall I addreſs my injured ſiſter? Ellen, Ellen, you remember our laſt parting—my heart beat tumultuouſly with the throbs of paſſion—I had torn myſelf from her I adored, I had quitted the idol of my ſoul!——You pitied your diſtracted brother—you mingled your tears with his—you folded his palpitating boſom to yours—you liſtened to his agonized murmurings!—Little did we then

A dream

dream that four long years ſhould witneſs our entire ſeparation—little, little that Ellen ſhould be ignorant of her Edmund's deſtiny—that he ſhould wander to and fro on the earth, nor dare ſeek the ſweet ſolace of a ſiſter's pity!

Overlook, I beſeech you, theſe ſtrangeneſſes in my conduct! acknowledge, though he deſerve it not, your ſuffering brother! He would fain, by confeſſing to you all his feelings, in ſome meaſure entitle himſelf to your forgiveneſs, were he not fearful of contemplating that gloom which hung over his youthful days! O God! Ellen, thou knoweſt not, nor oughteſt thou to know, what I have gone through! my heart has been torn by piece-meal—its minuteſt fibres have been probed by the unſparing hand of calamity! I have ſuffered till all is blank;

blank; but no, no, there is one thought yet that raiſes a wild throb in my harraſſed boſom—it is the thought (may I name it to you) of my once beloved Gertrude!

Pardon, pardon theſe digreſſions! I wrote merely to inform you of my arrival in London, to claim your forgiveneſs, to ſolicit an interview, (for I have learned your place of abode by means of your brother Roger) in ſhort, to inform you that there is in exiſtence ſuch a being as I!

Remember me to my mother if ſhe think ſuch an outcaſt worthy her notice, and accept the prayers of

Your brother,

EDMUND OLIVER.

P. S. Direct to me with my brother Roger.

LETTER II.

EDMUND OLIVER

TO

CHARLES MAURICE.

London, Sept.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

I AM about to perform my promiſe. We have been acquainted with each other theſe fifteen months, and yet you are ignorant of my connections. You have been aware that ſome myſtery enveloped my fate—you perceived that my mind brooded on the days which were paſt!

Often when we have been traverſing ſome beautiful tract of country together, tranſported by the mutual yearnings of our ſouls, by the feelings of our fellow natures, often in ſuch moods have I

ſcarcely

ſcarcely refrain'd from unboſoming myſelf—and when at evening, after a long day's fatigue, we have retired to the blazing hearth, have expanded each ſentiment with the heart-cheering beverage; oh then, how have I ached to tell you what a wretch I had been! But no, I could not! I durſt not hazard the loſs of your eſteem—I felt then that I was not worthy of you!—My character now has been more tried, is more elevated I truſt, and Heaven grant, that by expoſing my *paſt*, I do not eſtrange my *preſent self* from your affection!

I was born in Glaſgow. My father was a merchant of eminence in that city: his character was jealous, reſerved, unforgiving, and ſevere. He had married my mother in conſequence of

her beauty early in life: ſhe and another ſiſter were ſingers of the firſt faſhion and fame in London.

Miſs Sackville (for that was the maiden name of my aunt) was addreſſed by, and ſoon married to, the Earl of Cathcart, and her younger ſiſter was as reſpectably though not ſo oſtentatiouſly ſettled by a connection with my father.

I am the ſecond of two ſons, and have one ſiſter younger than myſelf. I paſs over the earlier years of my life, nor ſhall I endeavour to ſketch out my narrative till the developement of my paſſions gave a new character to my exiſtence.

The Earl of Cathcart had five children, two ſons and three daughters: the youngeſt of the latter, Gertrude, was of the

the ſame age with myſelf, and from being the moſt favourite companion of my infancy, became in riper years the object of my warmeſt affections.

Gertrude's father was a Roman Catholic: violent in his paſſions; ſtern, vindictive, and ſuperſtitious, he watched our intercourſe with a jealous eye: as the children of his wife's ſiſter, he had hitherto treated my brother, ſiſter, and myſelf, with external decorum, but ſecretly he hated the ſight of any one of us beneath his roof.

Gertrude's temper was ardent—her manners earneſt and impreſſive--ſhe never ſpake or moved but the ſoul beamed in her full eye.—She was impatient of controul, yet enthuſiaſtic in her deſires to diffuſe happineſs; impetuous; and quick in her

reſentments, yet ever ſoliciting an admiſſion into the ſtranger's breaſt!

We had always in the unthinking hours of infancy met each other with the moſt endearing familiarity: but the dawning of the paſſions came, and with it came diſtruſt, anxiety, ſilent miſgivings of the heart, a repreſſion of geſture, and an avertedneſs of look hitherto unknown. Each dared not meet the eye of the other, each ſought to unburthen the boſom's load by a trifling dalliance with ſurrounding objects; and the laſt perſon I accoſted, when I met Gertrude encircled by her friends, was ſhe whoſe name for ever trembled on my tongue!

Oh Charles, what days were thoſe to me, when after a ſeaſon of ruffling vexatious intercourſe with common ſouls, I flew

flew to the preſence of my Gertrude! Dare I tell thee in what manner we firſt diſburthened our oppreſſed feelings?

I had ſtolen from Glaſgow to my uncle's country reſidence four miles diſtant to paſs the day with Gertrude.

Lord Cathcart had juſt informed his daughters that as the ſeaſon was drawing near he would have them prepare for a winter's reſidence in London: he alſo announced his intention of preſenting them at Court.

The elder ladies, tranſported with the news, were haſtening with all the buſtle of inane importance to make ready for their approaching pleaſures: Gertrude had remained ſilent and downcaſt, and was ſtealing out of the apartment as I

entered the hall. On ſeeing me, (as if irreſiſtibly impelled) ſhe ſtepped haſtily forwards—"Edmund," ſhe would have ſaid, but ſhe look'd and was ſilent. She drew me into the garden—we croſſed that and the adjoining park—I was troubled, but a ſomewhat in her manner forbade my ſpeaking, and we preſſed involuntary forwards.

Beyond the encloſure of the park lay a ſmall glen, rocky, overhung with a few tufted trees, and dripping here and there with a fairy waterfall. We entered this, nor ſtopped till the branches of an aged lime (which having ſhot too widely from their ſtem, bended to the earth) met her eye. She ſhrieked faintly, and throwing herſelf on the ground, ſupported her head againſt a part of the tree. Here we had carved our names; here we had loitered

loitered many a ſultry noon, many a ſummer's evening; here we had played in the innocence of infancy; here we had been thrilled with ſenſations which we underſtood not!

It was autumn: the trees were wet with the morning fog; their hues were pale and ſickly: nothing interrupted the grey ſtillneſs of the day but the faint ruſtling of the leaf circling as it fell. Oh Charles, in that moment my ſenſes were ſuſpended! I felt a dim conſciouſneſs of coming felicity; I was ſubdued, and knew not wherefore! I gazed around me till the ſcene loſt its appearance of reality, and till all the air danced with ſome ſhadow of the object which then, more irreſiſtibly than ever, took poſſeſſion of my ſenſes! "Edmund,"—She faintly breathed out my name—"Edmund,

mund, we muſt part!" and as ſhe ſaid this, her looks and geſtures informed me what importance ſhe connected with the idea. At that moment I became conſcious of the extent of our attachment! The certainty paſſed inſtantaneouſly as a flaſh of lightening through my mind. I was poſſeſſed, ſpeechleſs! We remained immoveable for ſome time. I then approached her ſlowly, and with interrupted ſteps; and throwing myſelf by her, took her hand which was ſtretched at her ſide. She burſt into tears. We exchanged our feelings in broken murmurs, nor left the place till each had read the inmoſt ſoul of the other. In a few days the Earl of Cathcart and his daughters left Scotland. When Gertrude had quitted the neighbourhood, I became liſtleſs, melancholy, diſtracted, and loathing every object that ſurrounded me.

My

My father, though his family had for ſome time lived in Scotland, profeſſed the tenets of the Engliſh Church.

I was at this time eighteen years of age, and expected in a few months to be removed to Oxford, where I was deſtined to ſtudy divinity. Almoſt the only being which attached me to my native place had quitted it; and I now thought with rapture of a reſidence in England, as it would at leaſt make me feel nearer my beloved Gertrude. We had agreed to correſpond; we aſſumed towards each other the endearing epithets of brother and ſiſter, and opened without reſerve the hourly and momently joys of each paſſing day.

During the intermediate time, from her departure to my removal into England,

land, my hours were ſpent in rambling over that intereſting diſtrict which lies North-weſt of Glaſgow. I always carried Gertrude's letters in my pocket; theſe I peruſed and re-peruſed. I bathed them with my tears, and preſſed them to my boſom: they communicated a ſtrange comfort to the pangs that dwelt there. Her idea mingled with every view: my heart aſſociated its workings with the ſcenery around me: I gave a ſoul to every form; each object was impregned with my Gertrude's ſpirit! I had received ſtrong and delicate ſenſibilities from nature: having in my early life, from the moroſe and reſerved character of my father, who hated the intercourſe of his neighbours, been uniformly confined at home, I had acquired much timidity of temper. My mind was active, but ſlow to receive impreſſions from others: it

felt

felt its own ſhapings more intereſting than any ideas ſuggeſted from foreign ſources: it was too full of itſelf to be paſſive to the mouldings of authority or experience. From this reſtleſsneſs of ſpirit, ſupported by a warm and impetuous temperament, and connected with ſolitarineſs of habits, I ſoon acquired imagination; or the faculty of ever combining the moral with the phyſical world; or on the other hand, of embodying intellectual conceptions in the borrowed ſhapes of the viſible elements.

Not a ſcene was there around my father's dwelling which had not been endeared to me by aſſociating with it the ſenſations of my overflowing heart.

In this ſituation I was removed to England. The only perſon for whoſe ſepa-

ration

ration I felt the ſmalleſt pang, was a ſiſter three years younger than myſelf. Ellen was gentle, ſimple, and very affectionate. She had all the ſoftneſs of her ſex, with the frankneſs of an infant. She was the child of nature; the virtues which ſhe poſſeſſed ſeemed to have ſprung ſpontaneouſly in her boſom. Her character and that of Gertrude were exactly the reverſe of each other. Gertrude's paſſions were impetuous; Ellen had only meek affections. Gertrude openly reſiſted all controul; Ellen frequently lamented in ſecret, but never diſobeyed the voice of authority. Gertrude was reſtleſs and daring; Ellen was quiet, and her attachments were thoſe of habit and domeſtic ſympathy. Nevertheleſs from a poſſeſſion of many virtues in common, though they had aſſumed a different bias, theſe couſins entertained the fondeſt regard for each other.

From

From this time Charles, muſt I date the commencement of my misfortunes. Oh, that I could annihilate the remembrance of the three ſucceeding years! when I tell you their hiſtory, will not your purer mind revolt from your unfortunate friend? However I deem of all my calamities as uſeful experiences diſciplining me to perſeverance and patient virtue. Had I not known how weak I have been in the moment of trial, my imagination, dwelling on the poſſeſſion of virtue, unſullied, becauſe unattacked; would have become inflated with ſelf-adulation: and have pampered itſelf with a notion of ſolitary merit, till I had loſt all thoſe human feelings which perpetuate our bearings with fellow natures.

I ſoon fell into the ſnares laid for my morals: my feelings were intoxicated, and

and I ſank in the delirium of ſenſual gratification. Yet at this time I felt that every virtue, even though it coſt me the ſevereſt ſelf denial, was poſſible for me, could I find one being to ſympathize with me in the performance of it. My heart ached for fellowſhip; it endured not to keep itſelf aloof from the objects that ſurrounded it. Often after the phrenſies of intoxication, or the mad pleaſures of an illicit commerce; in the hours of ſucceeding vacancy, and freedom from the ſlavery of appetite, have I curſed myſelf in agony of ſpirit! I have thought on Gertrude, on the quiet, the intereſting pleaſures of my youth, and tears of the bittereſt anguiſh have courſed my cheek!

In the evening I have ſat alone in my room brooding over the expiring embers;

bers; then gazed wildly on the viſible darkneſs of my apartment. I have ſat thus till my ſenſes were ſwallowed up in vacancy. I have melted down hours in an indeſcribable trance, till the image of my Gertrude, which had ever been floating faintly before my ſoul, again recurred with new vivacity, and I ſtarted up groaning and gnaſhing my teeth!

During this time our correſpondence continued. What a pang of hollowneſs have I felt, when I have written to Gertrude with the deep and accuſing conſciouſneſs of my own unworthineſs! After I had ſubjected myſelf to the fitful tyranny of the paſſions, how wretched, how agonizing the reflection, that I could not open to her my whole heart; that I could no longer throw myſelf before her as I really was! I loved her,

loved

loved her even to diſtraction; but the idea of an abſent object, however it might fill my heart, and inflame my imagination, could not weigh againſt the omnipotence of the preſent impulſe. Even my vices in ſome ſort were ſanctified by her idea; and from a ſtrange ſubtlety of mind, I have ſhaped to myſelf a Gertrude amid the intoxications of ſenſual revelry.

I had been nearly three years in England when the news of my father's death arrived; and with it the more dreadful information, that by an unjuſt diſpoſal of his fortune he had left my mother and the reſt of his family deſtitute.

Two nephews of my father had been introduced by him into the houſe, ſoon after his marriage, with a view to their

aſſiſting

assisting him in the management of his concerns. These young men were crafty, and insinuating; and under the appearance of the most complying gentleness, concealed the deepest villainy of character. My mother, as I before mentioned, possessed great beauty. Her husband's nature was reserved and suspicious. Her manners, from the situation into which she had been brought, had acquired somewhat of levity; and to the consciousness of personal charms, she joined a fondness of heightening those charms by the assistance of dress.

The nephews of my father soon perceived the weak side of his character; nor did they long delay to attack it with their arts. They easily persuaded him, (who was too well aware of his own deficiency in those talents and qualities which

which are moſt intereſting to the female that my mother was unfaithful to her marriage vows. He ſuffered himſelf to be convinced, that neither my elder brother, my ſiſter, or myſelf were his own offspring; and brooding over this idea more and more as he advanced in years, (an idea to which he was not a little encouraged by his labouring under a rankling diſeaſe which fitted his otherwiſe ſuſpicious mind for the reception of any dark tale) he died leaving his whole fortune in the poſſeſſion of my couſins.

Theſe young men had taken care to watch aſſiduouſly by his bed-ſide, had eagerly caught at any appearance favourable to their wiſhes, and had as ſkillfully repreſſed any yearnings towards his own family; who during his laſt moments under the pretence of not diſturbing the dying

dying man were removed with the moſt perſevering caution from his preſence.

When the news of theſe circumſtances reached me, I had juſt been indulging in all the madneſs of pleaſure. I had for months paſt contracted debts which it was impoſſible for me to pay without the aſſiſtance of my father, an aſſiſtance which from what I already knew of his character, it was hardly probable he would lend me. Theſe events convinced me how little I had to hope; indeed they drove me to deſperation. Stung with remorſe, the poſſibility of my ever again aſſociating with Gertrude being paſſed away; (for now that the reſpectability of our family in the eyes of the world was gone, I learned that Lord Cathcart had interdicted all communication between any branch of it and his) removed at ſuch a diſtance

a diſtance from my home; a home too of which I now only thought in agony; deſtitute of the pecuniary means of returning thither, and too proud in my preſent condition to ſolicit the aſſiſtance of my ſummer friends, I quitted Oxford unknown to any one, and taking the firſt road that offered, purſued my way on foot, alone, and unfriended.

From the difference of religion between ours and Lord Cathcart's family, as well as from the inequality of rank, I never could have entertained ſerious hopes of poſſeſſing Gertrude with her father's conſent. His paſſions were ſtrong, but his temper was gloomily proud and ſuperſtitious: he had married from the former, but expected an implicit obedience on the part of his wife in conſequence of the latter: her character was

loſt

loſt in his, and Lady Cathcart was but the humble inſtrument of her Lord's views and inclinations.

It was a clear evening in June when I quitted the Univerſity; all the ſcenery ſlept placidly in the yellow moon light: I alone, unfeeling of the ſurrounding tranquillity, was diſturbed amid the profound repoſe of nature!

A melancholy deſpondence oppreſſed me; I dared not contemplate the next hour: I even dwelt on the dark vacancy of the future with a ſtrange perverted ſatisfaction of mind. The happineſs of my earlier days, the image of my ſiſter, the ideas of my home, the form of my beloved Gertrude, the paſt intoxications of my impetuous heart, all mingled together in one wild chaos of feeling.

No one object was definite to my mind; each idea was uncertain, gloomily indiſtinct, and ſtript of all its former attractions, for I felt as it were a ſupernatural calmneſs at the reſignation of my hopes, and almoſt a complacency in dwelling on the approach of calamity.

I was thus when you met me. I had perſevered in this wandering way of life, in this precarious mode of ſubſiſtence ſeveral days and nights. The highly wrought ſtate of my mind rendered me inſenſible to phyſical wants; I ſcarcely ſlept during this ſeaſon; ſometimes when moſt oppreſt I threw myſelf upon a neighbouring bank, but my ſhort and interrupted dozes partook of the character of my waking perceptions.

The

The day, the bleſſed day on which I firſt ſaw you, had been ſpent in more liſtleſſneſs, in ſadder deſertions of the heart than any which had paſſed ſince I had quitted Oxford. I felt a faintly-returning wiſh for human ſociety. My mind had been ſtrained to a pitch, at which it could not long remain; my reaſon muſt have given way had not nature again interpoſed: my body was emaciated; and though a few days before I had all the appearance of florid vigour, I was now ſunken to a ſkeleton; and as my intellectual phrenſy left me, tottering with very weakneſs.

I had ſtrolled in this ſtate of mind towards London; always avoiding the high road, but I imagine, unknown to myſelf, actuated by a wiſh to bury myſelf in the wilderneſs of that great city. To-

wards ſun-ſet I obſerved from a field which I was traverſing, a ſmall inn by the way ſide, whoſe appearance, from the delicate whiteneſs of the walls, the neatneſs of the ſurrounding garden, and in ſhort its general indications of cleanly comfort, looked more inviting than any dwelling which I had hitherto met with. I had entered it, and was juſt ſeated on the kitchen bench, when your manner of accoſting a poor ſoldier who ſolicited your relief drew my attention. You know the reſt. Your love of ſpeculation on mankind induced you to remain in the common room. My ſtrange appearance did not eſcape your notice; you were ſtruck with the originality of my mind, for we ſoon entered into a converſation that led to an intimate developement of my ideas. You were then about to

leave

leave England for fifteen months in order to make a pedeſtrian excurſion amid the Alps. You ſuggeſted the idea to me, and no ſooner had you diſcovered the reaſon of my ill-feign'd reluctance, ariſing from pecuniary obſtacles, than you generouſly inſiſted on my ſharing your purſe.

Since that time Charles, all things have been to us in common; we have brought our minds to one identity; and there wanted nothing but this diſcloſure of my connections to complete our union. You had ſo far outreached me in moral excellence, that in your preſence I ſhrunk from an exhibition of my character. You have formed me Charles; you have regenerated me! nor do I at this time feel afraid that the confeſſion of what *I have*

been, will make you ceaſe to love me as *I am!*

EDMUND OLIVER.

P. S. My mother and ſiſter are with a Mrs. Alwynne, near Worceſter; I am indebted to Roger for this information.

LETTER III.

EDMUND OLIVER TO CHARLES MAURICE.

London, Sept.

Charles, how ſhall I tell it thee? what words can expreſs the perturbation of my mind? Gertrude, formerly my Gertrude, is in town!

I learned

I learned this from my brother Roger, whom you know I met ſo unexpectedly in Cheapſide. The Earl of Cathcart and his Lady are dead. Their eldeſt ſon has ſucceeded to his Father's title, and engroſſed almoſt the whole of his fortune; for the eſtate not being large, this, I ſuppoſe, is deemed neceſſary to ſupport the rank of the family. The two elder ladies live with him at Cathcart Caſtle; Gertrude and her brother, the Honourable Mr. Sinclair, are in town, and reſide in Gower-ſtreet, but as Roger has avoided all intercourſe with them, I know not what may be their object here.

I wrote the day before yeſterday to Ellen; ſhe, as well as my mother, are with a ſiſter of my father in Worceſterſhire.

It is now nine o'clock in the morning. I intend in a few hours to viſit (ſhall I call her ſo?) my Gertrude. My hand trembles, my heart palpitates, every object ſwims before my eyes when I think of this interview. Is ſhe changed? Ah, I fear much from the impetuoſity of her diſpoſition, her proneneſs to freſh impreſſions, the eagerneſs with which her heart always hailed new inmates, that ſhe is! But with this fear why ſhould I viſit her? Any thing is better than the ſuſpenſe I am now in: I muſt—I am impelled by an irreſiſtible neceſſity to ſee her!

Me ſhe knew when no other object had excited her attention. I too have neglected her! From a ſtrange dreaminеſs of diſpoſition; from feeling myſelf at that time unworthy of her; from not being

being able to write ſimply and ſincerely, conſcious as I was of vice, I at laſt gave up her correſpondence! It ſeemed as if the very love I bore her defeated its end. I often could not write becauſe I had too much to ſay. I could not expreſs myſelf, for my feelings were too big for utterance. I have frequently taken the pen and paper to addreſs her, and the attempt has ended in an inexplicable ſuſpenſion of my ſenſes, in uſeleſs lamentations, in unnoticed tears! It ſeemed a profanation to uſe *words* for my love! It wanted geſtures, looks, ſighs, and all the nameleſs offices of perſonal intercourſe to expreſs it! But why do I dwell on theſe debilities of feeling? So many objects lately have crowded into my mind, that even the idea of Gertrude was leſs obvious: it loſt its diſtinctneſs in the ſurrounding impreſſions. But

now that I am informed where ſhe dwells; now that I can look on the roof which ſcreens her; now that I can ſay to myſelf, "only this thin wall intercepts the preſence of my beloved;" *now* I am tranſported beyond the power of reaſon to ſubdue me! My nerves are thrilled —my blood boils—I am loſt for ever if ſhe love me not!

I go—I go—to-morrow thou ſhalt hear from me again!

EDMUND OLIVER.

P. S. Write as ſoon as you are arrived at Ambleſide.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

LADY GERTRUDE SINCLAIR
TO
Mr. EDWARD D'OYLEY.

London, Sept.

DEAR EDWARD,

LET us not be ſwayed by prejudice! You talk of the ſufferings of your parents, of the alienation of your connections; what are theſe parents, theſe connections to you? Are they more or leſs than human beings? ſurely not! Are their errors then, interfering with grand and general principles, which, unaccommodated to rank or ſtation, reſpect all human beings alike, are theſe errors to be attended to? Are you to forget the indefinite and incalculable benefit that you will be of to ſociety by trampling on the rubbiſh which fills the onward path

of

of man, directing your eye ſingly to the diſtant horizon of human perfection? And even, Edward, ſhould we conjecture falſely, (for finite exiſtences are ever liable to miſtake) we ought to bear in mind that the ſacred ſpark of truth is frequently elicited in the colliſion of heterogeneous and oppoſing principles.

Every daring *attempt, every new experiment affords data to the mind; brings materials for after reflection; and he who would walk erect in the difficult path of life, muſt often have fearleſsly plunged amid the intellectual chaos; from thence he will derive ſtores heretofore undiſcovered,

* "Yet be not diſcouraged; exerciſe your underſtanding, think freely, inveſtigate every opinion, *diſdain the rust of antiquity, raise systems, invent hypotheses,* and by the abſurdities they involve, ſeize on the clue of truth."

EMMA COURTNEY, by MISS HAYS.

vered, and by repeating his efforts will bring new combinations from the unaſſimilated and unarranged elements of moral ſcience.

Our minds, Edward, are of a common nature; we underſtand each other, and never do we riſe ſo ſublimely ſuperior to vulgar notions, as when our energies combine, and each forgets that there is an individual end in exiſtence.

Spurn then the dictates of thoſe grovelling ſpirits. Tell your *parents firmly that you are reſolved upon a connection with me. Open to them explicitly your views; announce to them unbluſhingly your principles! If they hearken to you and are convinced all is well!

* Mr. and Mrs. D'Oyley are Quakers.

well! If not, ſtill all is well—for you have done your duty!

And now my Edward, come, fly to my arms! Though born amid ſplendor, and accuſtomed to the trappings of rank, I early learned to deſpiſe them. My heart found not there its level. My reſtleſs ſpirit ſpurn'd at the cheaply purchaſed pre-eminence. I longed to ſoar with the truly great; with the champions of truth; the benefactors of mankind!

My mother was a very ſlave to the auſtere pride and overbearing inſolence of my father. My ſiſters were wholly engroſſed with the puppetry of their ſtation: dreſs, the etiquette of high life, intrigue, and faſhionable ſcandal, were their ſole objects. My elder brother

was

was the ſtupid heir of his father's title. He had gained the end of life, in the reſpect annexed to his rank, and ſought for nothing beyond. My father's ſuperſtition, to which I could never be a dupe, early led me to contemplate the ſanctions of religious obſervance: *to a mind like your's it were needleſs to ſtate the inferences I drew from theſe reflections.*

Lord and Lady Cathcart died within a ſhort time of each other.—The bulk of the family wealth came to my elder brother. His dependent ſiſters had nothing to chuſe beſide expoſing their charms to the higheſt bidder, or ſinking into the meanneſs of domeſtic vaſſalage.

My younger brother, Archibald, was in the army. His lively and ſpirited diſpoſition

diſpoſition led him to prefer a reſidence in London: behold me then his companion ſolely from a love of independence; a wiſh to ſtore my mind with principles gained from obſervation; and in ſhort, a character, which made a conformity to the views and manners of my family impoſſible.

In a ſituation like mine with reſpect to yourſelf, I deem it my duty to be perfectly ſincere. I was once beloved by a youth of moſt intereſting manners, and returned his love. But *love, Edward, is not, as ſome ſuppoſe, a blind and unreaſoning inſtinct—it is a paſſion that may be

* "After conſidering all that I have urged, you may, perhaps, reply—that the ſubject is too nice and too ſubtle for reaſoning, and that the *heart is not to be compelled.* Theſe, I think, are miſtakes."

EMMA COURTNEY.

be heightened, and perhaps owes its origin to phyſical ſympathies, but its growth, like that of any other of our qualities, depends on the permiſſion of the will; on the perception of fitneſs in the object. I quitted Edmund Oliver in Scotland four years ago, ſoon after we had haſtily exchanged our vows. He wrote to me for ſome time, but his correſpondence gradually flagged; and all that I can learn of him is, that at the Engliſh Univerſity, whither he was ſent by his father, he became a profeſſed libertine: and partly in conſequence of ſome family misfortunes, and partly owing to debts which he had contracted, he threw himſelf out of his ſituation. No one has ſince heard of him. He is either dead, or become the outcaſt of ſociety.

My

My heart often aches when I think of him. He was enthuſiaſtic and pure of ſoul. But it is weakneſs to yield to an impreſſion made on my imagination ere my mind had attained maturity.

D'Oyley, I charge you come here immediately, and depend on the affection of

GERTRUDE SINCLAIR.

LETTER

LETTER V.

ELLEN OLIVER
TO
EDMUND OLIVER.

Pentonville, near Worcester, September.

AND is my brother in England, my brother whom I have ſo long wept as no more? Edmund, Edmund, you uſed to be a friend to your ſiſter; you loved to ſtore her mind; to watch the feelings of her heart! and your letter would make me believe that you love me ſtill! yet what have you been doing with yourſelf theſe * fifteen months? But—ſilence! it

* The ſame diſpoſitions which produced his neglect of Lady Gertrude had operated towards his own family—beſide, while he was abroad with Maurice, he avoided the mention of his connections, and endeavoured by an inconceivable obſtinacy to baniſh them from his mind.

it is not for me to make theſe enquiries! You are good yet, I hope? Kindly-hearted as you uſed to be? When ſhall we ſee you here? I long to embrace you: I ſtretch out my arms involuntarily at the mere thought!

My mama and I are with aunt Alwynne. She is the beſt of human beings; and her daughter I ſhould deem it a waſte of words to praiſe; ſhe is too good to need commendation!

Mr. Alwynne has been dead for many years. My aunt is very infirm; but her ailment receives every poſſible mitigation from the unceaſing attentions of her daughter.

Do brother Edmund, come and join our circle. We are ever talking of you —mama weeps tears of joy when your name is mentioned. Do come, my brother! my brother!

ELLEN OLIVER.

LETTER VI.

LADY GERTRUDE SINCLAIR TO Mr. EDWARD D'OYLEY.

London, Sept.

FLY, fly hither Edward! hide me from my ſelf! I have ſeen a fearful ſpectre! I have ſeen Oliver! or if it be not he, ſome ſpirit, in order to diſquiet my ſoul, has aſſumed his appearance, and glided before me! I had paſſed in a chair

chair to the houſe of an acquaintance, and was waiting at the door for admittance, when the figure bruſhed by.

I reſtrained with difficulty an involuntary ſhriek: nor had I by any means recovered my ſelf-poſſeſſion when I was uſhered into my friend's apartment. I pleaded ſudden indiſpoſition as an excuſe for the ſhortneſs of my viſit; and returned directly to my brother's lodgings. When I arrived there, I found that ſome one, anſwering preciſely to the account I gave of this perſon, had called; but finding that I was not at home he haſtily withdrew. He ſeemed from the deſcription of Annie, my maid, much diſturbed, and faltered (as ſhe will have it) at the mention of my name: but ſervants love the marvellous; ſo that little attention is to be paid to her tale.

But

But Edward, if it ſhould be he? Oh heavens, it cannot—it muſt not! I feel that I have not the power to meet him undaunted! ſhould he come to claim the performance of my vows? But what are vows to me? Promiſes what are they? Snares! fetters for the mind! The very miniſters of perdition to the weak and inexperienced, who have not reſolution enough to throw off their preſſure! We ſhould be decided only by the principles of the preſent hour! The ſoul ſhould ever be its own arbitrator and diſpoſer. Shall a paſt weakneſs; ſhall a vow made under the conſtraint of biaſſed feelings; a vow (from the ſtate of mind being gone in which it was extorted) become a nonentity; ſhall ſuch a phantom govern intellectual agents? No! —The ſoul will never arrive at its greateſt poſſible

poſſible excellence till it acts ſimply from the concluſions, and calculations of the moment: it will by this mean attain an incredible elaſticity fitting it to the occaſion; and furniſhing it with ſelf-command in the moſt perplexing exigencies. I am ſatisfied! My judgment is convinced! Nor ſhall the imbecilities of the paſt: the ſhackles of narrow minds appall me! Edward I am thine! I am thine by the ſacred deciſions of eternal truth! Oliver come; and I will pity, but not fear thee.

GERTRUDE SINCLAIR.

LETTER

* LETTER VII.

CHARLES MAURICE
TO
EDMUND OLIVER.

Ambleside, Sept.

AND how fares Edmund? my heart aſks the queſtion earneſtly.

I arrived ſafely at my little cottage, and found my Rebecca with her two blooming cherubs well. Thank heaven that I am returned in ſafety! My ſpirit overflows when I think on the bleſſings which I poſſeſs; within my little habitation all my earthly hopes and deſires are centered. Oftentimes after a ſtroll through the green meadows behind our

* This letter was written before Oliver's narrative came to hand.

cottage, where my ſenſes have feaſted on all the fair varieties of nature; when I have returned to my happy family, my feelings have been too big for utterance! The tear has ſtarted in mine eye—the warmeſt gratitude to my creator has ſwelled in my boſom—and I have bent before him, devoutly acknowledging his ſupreme goodneſs, and the exquiſite harmony of his works.

Oh man, how miſtaken art thou with regard to thy true intereſt, when thou forſakeſt the ſimplicity of a country life! There is ſomething ſo healing in the beauties of the inanimate creation; its combinations are ſo infinite; its vaſt aſſemblage of rock, green vale, fair paſtures, grey lakes, ocean, and the ever changing ſky, ſo powerfully affects the imagination; ſo perpetually fills the heart,

heart, and aſſiſts the ſhapings of the mind; that it cannot fail to give a degree of pure elevation, not to be obtained without its influence, to the character.

How can a being who has nothing but diſtortion and foulneſs around him, acquire a fondneſs for moral beauty? Are narrow ſtreets, diſſonant cries, the howlings of dogs, the piteous ſobs of loathſome and ragged poverty, are theſe fit objects to diſcipline an immortal ſoul? a ſoul which in this infant ſtate of exiſtence, ought to be nurſing a taſte for excellence, order, and lovelineſs, as the only mean of gradually approximating it to the ſupreme ſource of harmony, and perfection.

Yet ſuch are the ſhapes preſented to us in thoſe graves of all the moral attributes

of human nature, large cities! However the mind may retain the belief of a deity as a ſpeculative principle, the ſenſe which feels him preſent in ſuch ſituations muſt inevitably deſert us!

You will hear Edmund, in the circles of London, that the ſociety and frequent intercourſe of fellow beings which towns only admit of, are neceſſary to the growth of mind; to calling forth the activities of the intellect: that men of genius are ound in cluſters, and that frequent colliſion is the only mean of eliciting truth. So far am I from admitting this as a fact, that I would exactly reverſe the propoſition: and inſiſt that no greatneſs of character, no vaſtneſs of conception were ever nurſed except in ſolitude, and ſecluſion.

Converſation,

Converſation, when indulged in with ſimplicity of intention is well as a relief from the more irkſome duties of life: much may be done too, where a ſtrict intimacy exiſts between two perſons, by the unlimited communication of ideas. But I firmly believe that nothing more tends to fritter away genius, and level down the ſublimity of original thought than the conſtant habit of attack and defence, of intellectual gladiatorſhip, adopted in literary and argumentative circles. Truth is ſeldom or never diſcovered where a third perſon is preſent to witneſs the triumph of one party, and the defeat of the other. Our paſſions are enliſted, in theſe ſituations, indiſcriminately on the ſide of virtue or vice; and we uſually revolt from, rather than yield to, an opinion announced by a ſucceſsful attack on our converſational powers: we aſſociate

with the principle the ſhame of our defeat, and frequently afterwards, be it ever ſo true, think of it with diſguſt.

It is not in the ſmoothneſs, the verbiage of literary parties that juſt principles are developed. I aſſure you my friend, that you will chiefly find them in the ſolitary hour when the heart is ſelf queſtioned, and the ſpirit communes with itſelf; when the mind broods over, and arranges cautiouſly its unſhaped materials; or in the quiet and confidential intercourſe of an unrivalling mind. A pert quickneſs, a talent for words, by no means implies extent of information, or richneſs of ideas: conſtant ſelf-poſſeſſion, and a good flow of animal ſpirits, will make a man eloquent with very little underſtanding: and he who on all occaſions throws off a ſentence glibly from his tongue; whoſe eye

ever

ever ſparkles with the acuteneſs of ready-made objection, has ſhallow perceptions, a falſe imagination, little ſentiment, and no heart.

When we parted, as my days paſs on in uniform tranquillity, it was agreed that I ſhould from time to time communicate my feelings and principles: the ſubject of this letter in your preſent ſituation ſeemed to me not unworthy your notice.

Your's ever and ever,

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER VIII.

EDMUND OLIVER

TO

CHARLES MAURICE.

London, Sept.

DEAR CHARLES,

I HAVE ſeen her—have folded her in my arms—have been intoxicated with the perfume of her breath!

When I firſt called ſhe was not at home. I went a ſecond time in the evening, and gained admittance. As I ſtepped to the door of her parlour ſhe was unconſcious of my approach; for it ſeems ſhe had laid aſide all the formality of high life. She was reading—a taper illumined her forehead; but the lower part of her face was hidden in ſhade. Her dark hair hung wildly

wildly over her ſhoulders; her eyes beamed with earneſtneſs and enthuſiaſm; and a white dreſs careleſsly enveloped her ſpirited and majeſtic figure. Her appearance is much altered ſince I left her—ſhe had then all the playful and bewitching graces of early youth; ſhe now poſſeſſes the more commanding ones of a countenance and geſticulation ſtrongly characteriſtic of the workings of an impetuous mind.

After I had reached the door I ſtood for ſome ſeconds, unable to move, contemplating her. My head became giddy —my feet refuſed to ſupport their weight —and it was the faint noiſe which my confuſion occaſioned that firſt drew her attention. She ſhrieked at the diſcovery; and in an inſtant we were in each other's arms, inſenſible to every object that ſur-

rounded us! Oh Charles, Charles, that embrace has lighted a fire in my veins which eternity cannot extinguiſh!

I made an aukward attempt to apologize for my viſit, which, however, was needleſs, as ſhe ſeemed perfectly ſatisfied with my conduct. After we were ſeated we remained for a conſiderable time in ſilence; now gazing at each other; and now withdrawing, with ill-concealed confuſion, the perplexed and anxiouſly-inquiſitive look!

I perceived during this interval that the colour ſometimes forſook her cheek, and then returned with a hectic and feveriſh fluſh. Her boſom was convulſed with half-ſtifled ſighs; and having ſuppreſſed her tears, with the ſtruggles of a mind determined to vanquiſh the

pleadings

pleadings of nature, her eyes became glazed with agony, and wandered with an anxious vacancy towards every object around her; as if ſhe were deſirous, by ſeizing on the verieſt trifles, to introduce other feelings in the place of thoſe which were evidently become inſupportable to her.

Meanwhile I was chained to the poſture in which I had thrown myſelf—the conſciouſneſs of my own exiſtence was gone—my looks were faſtened on her countenance and figure, and I lived in the mute expreſſions of her agitated ſoul!

At laſt ſhe interrupted my reverie by ſome trivial matter-of-fact remark. She affected at the ſame time the ſmile of unconcern, and in a few minutes ſo far collected

lected herſelf, as to aſſume (though not without ſome appearance of conſtraint) the ſemblance of cheerfulneſs and eaſe. It was evident that ſhe wiſhed to lead the converſation from any ſubject that might at all remind her of the paſt. Her manner was rather that of a new acquaintance attempting to attract your attention and amuſe your mind, than expreſſive of the unrepreſſed ebullition of one who had been the companion of your childhood; the earlieſt miſtreſs of your heart!

Yet ſtill Charles, ſhe was moſt intereſting to me! There is a vivacity in her manners—a voluptuous gracefulneſs in her figure—a ſoul-darting expreſſion in her eye—a wild luxuriance in her hair—an impaſſioned ſenſibility in her ſmile—and an exquiſite fervour in her more meditative expreſſions of countenance, which

which it is impoſſible to withſtand! I uttered but monoſyllables the whole evening. I was diſſatisfied and embarraſſed: yet at times when my ſoul fed on her looks, and recalled the yet perceptible traces of her former ſelf, I forgot my ſituation, and yielded myſelf to the inebriating draughts of rapturous paſſion!

We parted!—I trembled when ſhe put out her hands towards mine—my knees knocked againſt each other; and I was obliged to hurry from her preſence, without bidding her adieu, to conceal the agitation of my feelings!

I ran breathleſs to my brother's lodgings, threw myſelf on a couch, and paſſed the reſt of the evening in a ſtate of mind nearly allied to madneſs. A ſtrange huddle of indefinite ſenſations crowded upon me;

me; I drank goblets of wine, in order to ſwallow up the wild and phrenſying workings of my ſpirit, in the groſſneſs of bodily feeling.

I gradually became ſtupid, and almoſt inſenſible. My night was paſſed in feveriſh dozes, in which the images of the day fearfully and fantaſtically mingled; and I aroſe this morning much enfeebled and exhauſted.

You ſhall hear from me again to-morrow.

EDMUND OLIVER.

LETTER IX.

EDMUND OLIVER
TO
CHARLES MAURICE.

London, Sept.

DEAR CHARLES,

I HAVE not ſeen her ſince; nor ſhall I attempt it to-day: my feelings are too much exhauſted with yeſterday's interview, to be able to encounter a ſecond without longer repoſe.

My brother Roger, with whom I lodge, is an engraver: he has been brought up in connection with perſons, who with half his talents and qualifications, from ſuperiority of rank, treated him with contempt. His ſoul was not, like mine, ſoftened in youth by a paſſionate attachment. His character, early in life, was retired

retired and ſevere: affectionate when his confidence was once gained, but ever cautious in permitting himſelf to form a friendſhip; he always looked on the follies of mankind with contempt, and their vices with bitterneſs.

The misfortunes and conſequent degradation of his family, encreaſed the dark and ſuſpicious diſpoſitions of his ſoul: he had never ſtrengthened his underſtanding with general principles: his notions of virtue and vice, or of actions of good or bad tendency, were borrowed from inſulated facts, rather than from the concluſions of a deeply ſpeculative mind: he never could ſink a particular deformity in the grand whole.

In conſequence of this deficiency in point of intellectual comprehenſiveneſs, he

he has admitted a complete moral ſcepticiſm. His talents, which are by no means common ones, finding no object, have directed themſelves excluſively to the exerciſe of phyſical ingenuity, and the whole of his time is paſſed with his engraving tools or pallet, and implements of painting in his hand.

By means of theſe arts he ſupports himſelf in ſome degree of comfort: he occupies a third ſtory in Red-Lion-ſtreet, Holborn; aſſociates with no human being in London; is unmarried; and has led a ſolitary life till all ſocial intercourſe is become irkſome to him. In ſhort he is one of that incalculable number whom the injuſtice of mankind has ruined. His principles are ſhaken and gone; his heart is hardened; and though once poſſeſſing the moſt valuable materials for enſuring

ſuring happineſs to himſelf and others, he has long ſince ceaſed to exiſt as an intellectual or moral agent. You were with me when we met: he was aſtoniſhed, but nothing could now agitate him. He treats me with kindneſs, but converſes little. After our meals he conſtantly retires to his engraving room; where as I before told you, he paſſes all his remaining time.

Oh Charles, what a void does my heart feel now that we are ſeparated from each other! The auſtere and unſocial manners of my father introduced habits of a correſponding complexion into our family. I paſſed my infancy and youth in ſolitude; my feelings were ever more than commenſurate with the objects which acted upon them! I combined and recombined. I panted for happineſs which I had

I had not heard of! from this circumſtance may be traced my diſſatisfaction with the ſtate of ſociety in which I was educated; and my ſubſequent ardour for the introduction of more generous and impartial principles among men.

Even ſtrong phyſical feelings repelled and thrown back on the mind which aſſociates them with moral ſhapings, filtrate, and miniſter to the growth of intellect. Appetites and paſſions connect us with, and give a character to every ſurrounding object; teach us to inſinuate ourſelves into the ſouls of others, and make us as it were a part of their identity: theſe, if not gratified, remain as materials for freſh combination, and initiate us into all the motiveleſs obliquities of human agency. It is to theſe ſources that I trace the formation of my character:

it

it was the paſſion for Gertrude which had no ſooner attained maturity, than ſhe who inſpired it was removed, which paſſion gave a witchery at a critical ſtage of my exiſtence to the charms of nature. The objectleſs enthuſiaſm of my deſerted ſoul aſſociated itſelf with the intereſting ſcenes in the Weſt of Scotland, among which I uſed to wander unaccompanied for whole days together: ſince that time the country has always had a myſterious charm for me; it affects me more powerfully than I can account for, from the mere beauties of outline and colouring which it exhibits. I connect by a neceſſity of my nature with it, all that is pure and holy in feeling; all that is ſublime in imagination; all that is wild and enthuſiaſtic in ſentiment; all that is original in intellectual conception! I have had day dreams, and in thoſe day dreams have I

imagined

imagined myſelf maſter of ſome forty acres, which I cultivated with my own hands. I have planted myſelf in a green woody vale, too pictureſque to let my feelings ſlumber, and yet too confined to excite reſtleſſneſs of thought or deſire: quietneſs and entire ſecluſion formed the character of my retreat. I have moreover fancied myſelf a father and a huſband—my children have followed the plough, and have acquired independence from a negation of wants—their ſouls have been pure—objects of beauty harmonizing their tender affections, have alone touched them. In theſe dreams I have brought up theſe beings—in forming their minds I have been chiefly active—their mother has moulded (or rather carefully ſcreened from any improper impreſſion) their ſuſceptible hearts. I have died peacefully

in

in ſuch a ſcene, truſting that my offspring would not quit the ſimple life and tranquil abode of their father; truſting that I had educated them for virtue here and for happineſs hereafter!

Till I knew you, Charles, my mind, though richly ſtored with feelings and crude ſuggeſtions of its own, was wholly unformed. I had long ſeen through the thin gauze ſophiſtry which mankind in general ſanctify with the name of morals. I had perceived that all which was of conſequence in order to ſecure a character among men was to obſerve nicely the decorums of ſociety; the arbitrary conventions of artificial prudence! No vice was regarded as vicious in itſelf, no virtue was ſought for its own ſake—the tendency of actions to promote the ſucceſs of the individual was the ſtandard by which they

they were eſtimated: and men of the ſtricteſt morals ſeemed but forming a more cunning and ſubtle proceſs of ſelfiſh ſecurity than their neighbours. Religion was become a mere "rhapſody of words," the convenient diſguiſe of impoſture, or the reſource of weak and diſſatisfied minds—now it aſſumed the character of ſuperſtition, and degenerated into ſpiritleſs forms wholly unconnected with ſocial utility; now into frantic enthuſiaſm, burſting the boundaries of human action, and ſpurning at thoſe patient and rational modes of proceeding, which adapt our conduct to the exigencies of life. All was to me confuſed and chaotic; my faith had long ſince been ſhaken with regard to the adventitious appendages which mankind connect with their notions of piety and virtue—loathing the diſguiſe, I had nearly given up the fair

fair forms which the ſacrilegious hands of mortals had ſo artfully concealed. You purged my eyes from the film that envelloped them, you taught me to ſee things in their eſſence, you opened to me the beauty of Chriſtianity, ſhewed to me the neceſſity of evils we at preſent labour under, deduced from the character of thoſe evils the ſublime ſyſtem of optimiſm, convinced me that the mind is governed by definite laws; in fine, collecting theſe laws, and combining with them the heart-healing belief that the beſt poſſible exiſts every where, you have led me on to the grand ſpectacle of univerſal final happineſs to the whole creation.

But oh! my friend, that I could add, while I enumerate the mental bleſſings that you have heaped upon me, that you had taught me to ſubdue my wiſhes, to govern

govern myſelf with a maſter's hand! I know it, Charles, our paſſions are too impetuous to be trifled with; either we muſt completely cruſh them, or they inevitably will tyrannize over us—appetites will become feelings and affections, or theſe bleſſed graces of the ſoul will be loſt in appetites—there is no medium. But, Charles, I am weak—I feel that I am weak. I cannot endure the vacancies of ordinary ſituations. I plunge into vice, not becauſe it is pleaſant, but to avoid the more gnawing ſenſation of inſipid vacuity. Could I ever be with thee my character would riſe beyond the power of calculation. Here, Charles, I have none but objects of deformity before me—God only knows yet what Gertrude may be! To-morrow I ſee her again, and then for my trial.—Adieu,

EDMUND OLIVER.

LETTER XI.

EDWARD D'OYLEY

TO

Mr. CLAREMONT.

London.

DEAR CLAREMONT,

I ARRIVED here a few hours ago, and am now writing from my Gertrude's apartments.

She has been agitated by the unexpected appearance of a young man who was formerly much attached to her, but of whom during the laſt two years ſhe had heard nothing. From what I can learn, Edmund Oliver has genius, poſſeſſes an ardent mind, and an affectionate heart.

Oh!

Oh! Claremont, would that you were here to witneſs my happineſs—her looks, her geſtures faſcinate me! the ſoul of grace ſwims in her every movement; and her *mind* you can form no conception of till you have witneſſed its powers.

Never will I ſacrifice this ineſtimable prize to the narrow ſectarian prejudices of my connections; no, though worlds ſhould oppoſe me, animated by her ſmile, I could brave them all.

We are going to the theatre this evening. Gertrude and I take every opportunity of contemplating human nature.

Adieu,

EDWARD D'OYLEY.

LETTER XII.

EDWARD D'OYLEY
TO
Mr. CLAREMONT.

London.

DEAR CLAREMONT,

GERTRUDE's brother and I are this morning going round to my numerous acquaintance in town. Sinclair is as kind-hearted a fellow as ever—his great pleaſures are a plentiful dinner, his bottle, and a good companion—to be merry is his primary object, and when he is preſent, however ſerious the ſubject ſtarted may have been, it ends in a few ſeconds in a pun or conundrum—principles he has none, except thoſe of inſtinctive and indiſcriminate good-nature and generoſity. His ſiſter and I are much amuſed

amuſed with his company, as we neither of us reliſh your dull ſentimental moraliſts, who ſuppoſe that all virtue conſiſts in perſonal penance and ſelf-mortification.

The friends of freedom in town are to meet at the ——— Tavern to-morrow—for myſelf, with regard to this country, I conſider all conciliatory meaſures as uſeleſs—the ſtorm will ſoon come, and it now ſeems neceſſary to clear the miſts of the political atmoſphere.

Since our laſt petition for peace in Briſtol, my parents, who you know in common with other Quakers hold principles of non-reſiſtance in political matters, have treated me with much diſtance and reſerve, on account of the active part which I took on the occaſion—but

Claremont, it behoves, at this critical juncture, every man of ſpirit to ſtep forward—the State-blood-hunters it is true, lie in wait at every corner, but ought this to intimidate the man who loves his country? Should it not rather ſtimulate him to new endeavours to fan the dying embers of oppoſition, conſcious that if he fall in the attempt, he is a martyr in a glorious cauſe!——I hear ſome diſturbance in Gertrude's parlour, which joins the room in which I write—her bell rings—I go. *

Whom do you think I have met? Edmund Oliver, the ci-devant lover of my Gertrude—he had ſeated himſelf before I entered the room, but was apparently in a ſtate of extreme agitation. His manners were embarraſſed—his mind is ſingular

gular and original—on my appearance Gertrude withdrew—Mr. Oliver ſeemed at firſt averſe from any converſation, but by repeated efforts, which my curioſity to become ſomewhat acquainted with his character induced me to make, I at laſt drew him forth, though his exceſſive reluctance to ſecond my efforts only permitted him to utter a few broken ſentences.

His mind is certainly not a common one, but its growth is choaked by prejudice—he was abſurd enough to confeſs himſelf a Chriſtian—would you believe it? a Chriſtian! and pretend to the heart of the ſoaring, the enlightened Gertrude!

Your's ever,

EDWARD D'OYLEY.

LETTER XIII.

EDMUND OLIVER
TO
CHARLES MAURICE.

London, Sept.

OH Charles, I am deſpiſed, contemned, ſpurned at—I paſs for an ideot—I—crawl tremblingly to a woman's door—pronounce her name with a faltering voice—juſt ſtagger to her apartment—preſent myſelf in her preſence tottering on the very brink of mental annihilation—my voice failing me—my eyes fixed on the ground—my knees ſcarcely ſupporting my weight—ſhe receives me calmly—admits another (perhaps a being more favoured than myſelf) into the apartment, and then retires—here end my hopes—here end thoſe delicious picturings

ings of my imagination—I had been dreaming of Gertrude, that ſhe was unchanged in diſpoſition ſince I formerly knew her—I had been fancying myſelf pouring out my whole ſoul before her, diſburthening my full and oppreſſed heart—I had fancied her mingling her tears with mine—preſſing my palpitating boſom to hers—I had been ſhaping the raptures of Paradiſe—the bliſs of bleſſed ſpirits—Oh! Charles, [illegible] ſhould end in this.

Nor were the mortifications I have met with this morning completed. On my return from Gertrude's lodgings, as I was paſſing one of the ſtreets which lead from the Weſt end of the town to Holborn, I obſerved a crowd flocking together—as I approached, I diſcovered that it was occaſioned by two men, who having quarrelled,

had come to the determination of deciding their diſpute by a boxing-match. One of the fellows, as I paſſed by and glanced my eye towards them, ſtruck his antagoniſt ſo unmercifully on the ſide of his head, that his eye and noſtrils guſhed out with blood, and it ſeemed with difficulty that he could continue his defence—my principles and feelings would neither let me remain a ſpectator, or proceed on my way—I preſſed through the crowd—and going up to the two men, demanded in a firm tone of voice the cauſe of their diſpute—they diſregarded my inquiries—I entreated them to deſiſt for a moment—they were ſtill deaf to me—beſides, the hiſſes and clamours of the women and children, and perſons who were betting on the ſucceſs of the contending parties, drowned my voice—I ſtood patiently remonſtrating, and endeavoured

deavoured by the moſt fervent entreaty and geſticulation to attract their attention, but in vain.

Still believing it to be my duty not to deſiſt, I claſped the arm of the one next me, intending by force to prevent, if poſſible, a continuance of this wanton barbarity. The other, exaſperated at my interference, directed his diſappointed rage againſt me, and by a furious blow laid me ſenſeleſs at his feet—the crowd alſo preſſed on me, and I gueſs that by this means my bruiſes were multiplied. When I had in ſome meaſure recovered, I found myſelf ſupported by two gentlemen in a grocer's ſhop—after making an effort to expreſs my ſenſe of obligation, I begged of them to call a coach, and was with ſome difficulty conveyed to my brother's lodgings: on my arrival I was put to bed—a

ſurgeon

ſurgeon was ſent for—my bruiſes appear to be of little conſequence, except as they confine me to my chamber, and increaſe, from ſecluſion and phyſical pain, the ſuffering ſtate of my mind—but I conſole myſelf with the idea that I am now feeling inconvenience in a good cauſe. Philoſophy is not a thing that ſhould hang up in the hall of pomp like *the rusty* armour of one's forefathers; it muſt be uſed, and in order to this, there muſt be occaſions and neceſſities for it.

But how does this philoſophy, this energy of mind fail me when I think of Gertrude!—enough, enough—I will, I ought to force my mind to ſome other object.

I am at a loſs to conceive who the young man could be whom I met this morning. His manners are brilliant; his

his perſon uncommonly fine; he appears confident of his own powers, and anxious to diſplay them. I diſcovered him to be a Democrat; his principles appear unarrranged, benevolent, and of wide application, but ſuperficial, and negligently imbibed. I could perceive in him the ſneer of ſelf-congratulating ſuperiority, when he diſcovered that I was a Chriſtian. "You deem, then, Sir, that religion is convenient as a political reſtraint on the minds of the vulgar—" "No," I anſwered, "I rather conſider the poſſeſſion of it as the ſublimeſt prerogative of the human mind." "You are an enthuſiaſt, Sir, I fancy;" and he changed the converſation, haſtily turning his head to conceal a ſarcaſtic ſmile.

Your's ever and ever,

EDMUND OLIVER.

P. S. I have received your letter—my ſilence with regard to its contents implies my complete conviction.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

CHARLES MAURICE

TO

EDMUND OLIVER.

Ambleside.

I HAD long, deareſt Edmund, imagined that ſome ſuch ſecret as that you have confeſſed to me, weighed upon your mind: the vehemence and enthuſiaſm with which you often ſpake of the intoxications of the paſſion, convinced me that you were not ſuperior to its influence. I ſay not *superior*, Edmund, for I deem that man ſo far weak, who lets any one paſſion (to the excluſion of the others, and to the ſetting aſide the juſt equipoiſe of the deſires of the mental and phyſical conſtitution) govern and ſubjugate his ſoul.

Had

Had I a ſon of fourteen or fifteen years of age, I had rather behold him tranſported with the fervor of love, than indifferent to every object, and inacceſſible to all impreſſions; for I conſider ſtrong paſſions, if properly diſciplined and directed, as the baſes of imagination and richneſs of mind.

The final cauſe of all our appetites (for ſurely the Deity might have introduced other means of perpetuating the ſpecies), is calling forth the latent faculties by the connections which they furniſh with ſurrounding circumſtances. While their influence laſts, they give an undue value to the object which they reſpect, (a value which, if this object were ſet before us with the other ends of exiſtence and ſources of pleaſure, it would by no means be found to poſſeſs.)

This

This undue appreciation puſhes us on to violent and preternatural effort, and thus the individual character is gradually developed; and it is only in this way that I can look on love with complacency. As indicating the ſuperabundant workings of a pregnant mind, I reſpect it in common with every energy, which, properly directed, may become ſalutary to the ſpecies, but as an end of exiſtence I deſpiſe it with my whole ſoul.

What! ſhall a man, ſhall a being who has ſo "large diſcourſe of reaſon," a being ſuſceptible of indefinite progreſſion, ſhall he ſtoop to the contemptible thraldom which chains him to a fellow animal —no, Edmund, it muſt not, ſhall not be— Shake yourſelf from the duſt of earthly deſire, and remember how exalted may be the purpoſes of our nature!

Beſides,

Beſides, my friend! the intoxication of this paſſion can never *last.* The greateſt perhaps of all misfortunes is the being connected with a woman whom we have ſeen thro' the medium of an inflated imagination; if our delirium ſhould, from coincidences which ſo rarely occur, that they may be almoſt conſidered as miraculous, *continue*, we ſink in the dainty ſlothfulneſs of perſonal indulgence—we are attracted as by magic to the ſilken couch of pleaſure, and in the end loſe the nerve of manhood—our ſouls become emaſculated; the arm, which might wield the elements, is palſied with impotence; and if this enchantment ceaſe, ſhall we look with complacency on an object in the light of a mere human being, whom we have adored as an angel—to whom we have aſcribed the myſterious ſanctity of divinity, the unceaſing power of inebri-

ating

ating the ſoul! Surely no! Her whom we have worſhipped we can never rationally love; and the miſtreſs of a fancy-crazed lover becomes to the huſband a vexatious appendage, infinitely lower than woman.

If you marry, marry from ſerious and well grounded eſteem, and not from love. I view your paſſion with intereſt, as eliciting the powers of your mind; but Heaven grant that you form no connection while under its influence.

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

CHARLES MAURICE
TO
EDMUND OLIVER.

Ambleside.

DEAR OLIVER,

I AM about to reſume the ſubject of my laſt letter.

Love, my friend, is not a propenſity to be trifled with. It is the moſt encroaching, and certainly the moſt ſeductive inclinations of our ſouls. But, conſider for a moment, is the ſtate of mind in which a man finds himſelf when engroſſed by a violent attachment, one that fits him for performing the offices and duties of life. Human exiſtence to the million is not made up of rapturous agitations,

tations, and debilitating day-dreams!—No; the dull realities of life, hard perplexities, ruffling vexations, and trials requiring fortitude and perſevering patience to overcome them, fall to the lot of moſt men.

Aſk the poverty-ſtricken mother of a young and craving family, what ſhe knows of theſe tranſports?—She will underſtand you not: or if ſhe do, ſhe will turn her head and weep! Aſk the virtuous young man, who devotes himſelf to the maintenance of aged parents; and weds himſelf to the fate of an overgrown, becauſe neglected family, what he knows of *love*, and he will return the queſtion with a ſtifled groan! Aſk the philoſopher, the patriot, the wiſe man that ſpeculates, and the good man that exerts himſelf for the well-being of fellow natures, what they

they have to do with love, and they will look down upon you as the very inſect whom they tread not upon becauſe it has life, and is one of God's creatures, but of its uſe they have no certain knowledge.

Fly then, Oliver, from thy thraldom; this degrading vaſſalage of the ſoul! You have experienced long enough the turnings and overturnings of paſſion, and conflicting impulſe. Rouſe yourſelf! Collect, with manly fortitude, your energies together! Weigh the extent of your powers: calculate on your future capabilities; and proceed to wield, with an invincible arm, your intellectual weapons in the cauſe of truth.

Oh Oliver, Oliver! think but on the materials you poſſeſs; think on what countleſs

countleſs ſufferers there are in this wide world to whom you may communicate comfort. Viſit the widow and the fatherleſs. Be the protector of inſulted innocence; the aſſertor of the oppreſſed man's right! Aſſume theſe ſacred functions, and you will not complain of the vacuities of life; you will not pamper yourſelf with the daintineſs of imaginary ſuffering.

I ſhall above all things wiſh to ſee you the huſband of a ſerious and well-diſpoſed woman. To contemplate you in the ſacred character of her protector, and the father of blooming and happy children.

When you have made a rational choice inform me; my purſe is at your diſpoſal. We will enlarge my farm. A houſe ſhall be

be procured for you in the neighbourhood; and my Rebecca and I ſhall ever think it one of the greateſt pleaſures of our exiſtence to miniſter to the accommodations of my deareſt friend.

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER XVI.

EDMUND OLIVER TO CHARLES MAURICE.

London.

DEAR CHARLES,

SHE has juſt left me! I cannot make you underſtand the faſcination of her manners; the enthuſiaſm of her ſoul; the grace that lives in her every geſture; the thrilling tones of her full and mellow voice! No, Charles, to comprehend her power of holding the heart captive, you muſt

muſt have ſeen her, converſed with her.

A girl who waits upon my brother, is, I find, acquainted with one of her ſervants. They had met in the city, and by this means Gertrude had gained intelligence of my *rencontre*, and the place of my abode.

She found me in a ſmall ſitting room, adjoining to my chamber. I was reclining on a couch, and deeply engaged in reading one of my moſt favourite authors when ſhe entered.

Though her manner was generous and noble; perfectly frank and unaffected; yet there was a chearful eaſe in it, which kept her aloof from me. My ſoul was oppreſſed and weighed down; for I ſtood

in

in need of finding her ſoul in a corre-ſponding tone to mine, to embolden me to diſcloſe my feelings. There is too an impetuoſity, together with a certain want of caution in her mode of expreſſing her-ſelf which ſtartled me. Her principles ſeem grand and deciſive; denoting a vi-gorous and independent mind: but they are of that ſpecies which rather calculate her for exciting ſurprize in a mixed mul-titude, than for winning the confidence of a ſolitary being.

I was dumb! aſtoniſhed at the capa-ciouſneſs of her ſoul, bewildered with the magnitude, connected with ſomewhat of flightineſs in her conceptions.

She is indifferent to me Charles!— Benevolence, kindneſs, and affectionate attention, beam in her looks and man-

ner; but there were none of the timid tenderneſſes of love, none of the ineffable ſolicitudes of paſſion.—No, Charles, ſhe is not the being which I left her! But ſhe is lovely ſtill! and ſo forcibly is her paſt image impreſſed on my mind, that I ſeize with avidity the faint reſemblances which remain of what ſhe was.

She ſat with me half an hour, and then, with ſomewhat of affected indifference and careleſſneſs of manner, ſaid that ſhe expected Mr. D'Oyley to call and conduct her home. In a few minutes we heard his knock. I perceived that ſhe turned pale at his entrance, and very apparently hurried his departure; for ſhe ſeemed deſirous of prolonging the call; nevertheleſs, in conſequence of ſome looks and geſtures from her expreſſing very meaningly her wiſh to retire, he

propoſed

propoſed waiting upon her home, and they quitted me.

Who can this man be? Is he a favoured lover of Gertrude's? Oh! Charles, that thought phrenſies me.—It ſets my brain on fire! Yet why ſhould I be thus affected? She is not the Gertrude which I formerly loved! But no matter—no matter! there is ſomething of her paſt ſelf remaining, and I have ſold myſelf to adore her throughout my future exiſtence!

EDMUND OLIVER.

LETTER XVII.

EDMUND OLIVER

TO

CHARLES MAURICE.

London.

DEAR CHARLES,

I WAS well enough yeſterday to leave the houſe. I employed the morning in traverſing the ſtreets of this great city. How irkſome, how horribly irkſome, is this wilderneſs of men! You meet thouſands of fellow beings, and not one that has a ſympathy with yourſelf! In large cities, from each individual, being under the neceſſity to ſtruggle with a multitude, for his own emolument, every face ſeems to have acquired an unwholeſome caloſity, an unnatural acuteneſs. The very manner in which a London man

man paſſes in the ſtreet, is that of conſequential buſtle, and a ſticking out of the elbows, accompanied with a look that ſays, "Retire you here, and you there, I muſt mind MY OWN buſineſs."

When my ſoul is full—when it aches to be underſtood, and to feel a common exiſtence with another ſoul, how loathſome is this deſert of human kind, this waſte, this chaos of exiſtence! The unnatural flocking together of the ſpecies hardens and *unſocializes* the heart more perhaps than uniform ſolitude.

Human intercourſe becomes ſo cheap that it is diſregarded. The pains aſſociated with it from its burthenſome frequency, and from the aſpect of perſonal intereſt, which it always wears in towns, overbalance the pleaſures; ſo that in the

end a citizen, when he would ſnatch a brief taſte of enjoyment, ſhuns with a monſtrous perverſion his fellow beings, and hugs himſelf in the ſecurity of a miſanthropic retirement.

In ſhort, I hardly know which is the moſt unfavourable to the ſocial virtues, an anchoritical ſecluſion, or a continual joſtling with common natures, rendered uncongenial by jarring arms. Cities are the very graves, the cemetries of human virtue! Sincerity, ſimplicity of heart, genius, and purity of principle, all neceſſarily die away in them. I never ſee a concourſe of men, but I feel a ſad oppreſſion of ſoul; nor a *city*, but with a prophetic aſſurance that the guilt of its inhabitants encreaſes in proportion to its aggregative proſperity.

Oh

Oh Charles! will the time ever arrive when men will ſink their individual feelings in the general maſs of exiſtence? Is human nature capable of diveſting itſelf of that ſenſation of private emolument which now coaleſces with all the active motives of man? We are all unhappy; all complaining; all friendleſs; all lamenting the want of an object in life! When, if we would but annihilate ſelfiſhneſs; regard the intereſts of others as our own; narrow our phyſical ſphere, and widen our intellectual one; ſink our own wants, and live in the happineſs of others: throw aſide the panoply of artificial and perſonal diſtinction, and feel a common identity with mankind at large, we might be happy at all times, ever feel our ſouls raiſed and exalted by the moſt auguſt of ſpectacles, a gene-

ral diffuſion to ſentient beings of progreſſive and illimitable felicity!

That human nature is capable of diſintereſtedly attaching itſelf to an object, we have proofs every day. By a diſintereſted attachment, I mean deriving an immediate pleaſure from it, without (by a reflex act of the mind) transferring *that pleasure* to any deſirable end, which is to accrue from the poſſeſſion of the thing which delights us.

The miſer who loves his wealth, not becauſe it is a mean of procuring comforts to him, loves it for its own ſake. The being who has ſo far perverted his mind as to commit bad actions, not that ſome advantage may accrue to him, but from a ſtrange obliquity of underſtanding

ing loves vice diſintereſtedly. The mother too, who having at firſt attached herſelf to children, from the pleaſant ends ſhe aſſociated with them; now, though thoſe children from ſickneſs, or undutiful conduct, bring her nothing but pain, loves them: ſhe ſtill is diſintereſted. If human beings, then, are capable of this quality of annihilating ſelf, with regard to ſingle and inferior objects, by a proper proceſs of mental aſſociation, why may they not be diſciplined to love mankind at large, unthinking of individual or phyſical ends; to feel benevolence its own reward; to be ſatisfied with the ſweet conſciouſneſs of virtue; the bleſſed peace of a ſelf-approving ſoul?'

While the words *mine* and *thine* laſt, it is impoſſible that this complete ſelf-abaſement ſhould be familiarized to the mind.

We cannot ſee, and come in contact with objects without connecting ideas and ſenſations with them; and in proportion as the objects are beautiful and deſirable, the aſſociated impreſſions will be vivid and laſting. Now wealth procures to weak man ſo many ſources of delight; it ſo envelopes him with beauties of his own creation; with forms to which the faſcinating ſenſation of "*mine*" ſubtly coaleſces, that it is impoſſible a being in this predicament ſhould ever arrive at the ſtate I have been deſcribing: the laws of nature, and mental aſſociation forbid it. Now, a complete ſelf-annihilation and abaſement, is the doctrine held out by Revelation as the indiſpenſable mean to happineſs hereafter. But we have ſeen that this cannot be obtained by the great and honourable of this world, I therefore believe that "meek man, and lowlieſt

lowlieſt of the ſons of men," when he ſays, "It is *easier* for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven."

EDMUND OLIVER.

LETTER XVIII.

ELLEN OLIVER TO EDMUND OLIVER.

Pentonville, near Worcester.

WHY does Edmund thus delay to viſit his ſiſter? Indeed, indeed, it is not kind of you to keep me ſo long in anxious ſuſpenſe! and you have not written for ſeveral days—Why is it ſo, Edmund?

Do

Do you intend to alarm me by a ſecond diſappearance ?

My couſin Edith and I ramble, almoſt every fine evening, through the green meadows which lie near the Severn: their exquiſite verdure, the woodineſs of the ſurrounding plain (over which the towers and ſteeples of Worceſter riſe on one hand, and on the other the long chain of Malvern hills), furniſh us with a variety of objects the moſt intereſting to contemplate.

We often take a favourite author with us in theſe rambles: generally ſome poem which harmonizes with the feelings which the ſurrounding ſcenery excites. At theſe times we long for you near us. You would teach us to reliſh the beauties of nature, even more than we do

do now; while you pointed them out to us with all the enthuſiaſm of a poet, and ſelected their moſt intereſting combinations for our notice: a book too in your hands (while at the time you are reading, I might contemplate the countenance of my long abſent brother), would be doubly grateful.

We love to watch the laſt gleam of day on the downy ſides of the Malvern hills—to ſee the hazineſs of evening gathering round them, and at laſt almoſt to loſe their outline in the thickening ſhade; or, at other times, to obſerve the fantaſtic cloud wander on their tops, now concealing them, then deſcending almoſt to their baſe, and permitting their undulating ſummits to peer unpropt in the ſky.

Edith

Edith and I almoſt wholly ſeclude ourſelves from ſociety. Mrs. Alwynne is the beſt of women. From her ſtrength of mind, and intereſting converſation, no place is ſo pleaſant to us as home.

Edith has lately been addreſſed by a young gentleman, who reſides in the neighbourhood, of unexceptionable character: but ſhe has poſitively refuſed his attentions; alleging that neither her own inclinations, or the precarious ſtate of her mother's health, will permit her to think of changing her way of life.

Every evening, Edmund, after the time has elapſed when the ſtage from London reaches this neighbourhood, I become ſo melancholy and dejected! "No Edmund!" I ſigh to myſelf. Ah, my brother! how long muſt this ſigh recur every four and twenty hours?

Mama

Mama begins to think your conduct ſtrange — do viſit us, if it were only for her ſake!

ELLEN OLIVER.

LETTER XIX.

EDMUND OLIVER TO ELLEN OLIVER.

London.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I HAVE received your letter. Your intereſt in my concerns, and anxiety to ſee me, excites my warmeſt gratitude! But Ellen, I am ſpell-bound! chained as by witchery to this ſpot! You know my former attachment to Gertrude; ſhe is in town, and I cannot tear myſelf from her!

her? I have a few lines by me, addreſſed to yourſelf, and having nothing better to offer, I ſhall conclude my letter with them.

My Siſter! often does my lonely heart
Dwell on thy parting look---thy graſp of love!
Dear girl! thou know'ſt with what a willing fondneſs
I have watch'd thy opening mind, with how much warmth
I have caught th' unfolding ſentiment, the wiſh
Newly develop'd! I have liſten'd to thee,
And of thy innocent feelings have partook
E'en till I liv'd in thee, and melted down
Years of paſt bitterneſs! and now unbleſt
By all the hallow'd charities of home,
By all thoſe nameleſs offices of love,
Which may not paſs its bounds, treaſures whoſe worth
The mortal may not know who ſojourns not
An alien from his kindred, I would fain
Solace my poor heart imaging thy ſmiles,
Thy kindly accents, thy mute eagerneſs,
To fill for me life's gnawing vacancies:
But ah! the thought how diſtant thou art from me
Embitters the remembrance, turns the tear
Of gentle ſorrow to ſo *hard* a pang,

I may

I may not give it utterance!
But may'ſt thou
Live happy—and may he whoſe ſhaping ſoul
Had imaged a ſtability of bliſs
This earth may never boaſt; may he prevent
The ſad experience that would ſupplicate
That mourning One, that melancholy form
Of *dreariest Peace*, which broods on Folly's grave!
And with a fixedneſs of look which tells
That mortal hopes and fears have ſhaken her
Till all was blank, and they could work no more,
Strikes a moſt deadly calm! May he, dear friend,
His diſappointments ſo transfer to thee,
That they may huſh each mortal reſtleſsneſs;
Yet mix'd with ſomewhat of the ſweet delights
Which mingle with paſt griefs, rather ſubdue
To a moſt enviable quiet, a mood
Of meekeſt ſelf-content, than numb the ſoul
Or freeze to apathy!
Nor do not I
Sometimes indulge the dream that we may meet,
Beloved Siſter, in ſome lowlieſt ſhed
Far from the *ſtir* of men; and we will there
Sum up each earthly peril, and if ſo
Our ſouls may win that holieſt confidence
Cheering the pure in heart, ſome natural tears

Of

Of no mean tranſport ſhall bedew our cheeks;
And we will hallow to the Being that gave
" The myſtery of life," that bleſſed ſpot,
E'en till it ſeems a little Heaven below!

My beſt love to my mother.

EDMUND OLIVER.

LETTER XX.

EDMUND OLIVER
TO
CHARLES MAURICE.

London.

DEAR CHARLES,

TALK not to one diſtracted of the omnipotence of reaſon! Mock not a madman with the idle vapourings of philoſophy! Your words are unmeaning as idiotcy—impotent as the inarticulate air

air? Every atom of the objects that ſurround me; every cloud that floats over my head; every ſound that my ears drink in; every ſhaping of exiſtence; even the moſt characterleſs toys of life are infected by, and receive importance from my paſſion! I glue myſelf to the chair on which ſhe ſat; I am loſt in moulding her geſtures; in recalling the evaneſcent graces of her figure to my mind! I tread with rapture the very ſpot which her feet have ſanctified. I recall with ecſtaſy her excruciating farewell tones! I am not myſelf.—My exiſtence is not my own!—It is her's.—I baſk and live in the emanations of her ſpirit!—This, and more than this ſhe ſeems to me when I am ſeparated from her; when ſhe is preſent, the reality is not equal to the picturings of my imagination. There

is

is a ſomewhat wanting; but I have not diſcovered what it is. Her manner intimidates and repreſſes me. She is an object retiring from my graſp; yet my paſſion for her ſeems hourly to encreaſe! How is this, Charles? My ſpirit is more than ever poſſeſſed, yet the reality, the ſource of my delirium, methinks, is on the wane! All is ſtrange—perplexing—incoherent! My ſoul is phrenſied!—every pulſe beats with agony---every pore aches with ſenſation! Yet when I examine myſelf, no adequate object ariſes! I fall back as in a dream: I ſhudder at my own weakneſs: I totter like an unſupported thing; and ſink to the darkneſs of unutterable horror!

Oh God, Charles, all is over! She is gone, gone for ever! I am enduring the torments

torments of hell! Every particle of my frame has a ſeparate exiſtence, and endures an infinite anguiſh!

My brother has juſt returned from his morning's buſineſs; and has heard from perſons likely to be acquainted with the circumſtance, that in a few weeks Gertrude is to be married to this D'Oyley.

No matter! I have ſent for wine. I have thrown myſelf on the couch where ſhe ſat; and for this day at leaſt ſhe is mine. My brother is gone. Yes, Charles, not Omnipotence itſelf could tear her from me now. My exiſtence and her's muſt ceaſe together!

I will yield myſelf to the delirium of this moment's impulſe! By the aid of large draughts of wine, and the very objects

jects being preſent in connection with which I formerly ſaw her, I can bring her (not an unreal phantom) before me, and mould it to my purpoſe! I will interrogate her with the agony of an undone ſoul! I will look her into madneſs! and we will embrace with unutterable groans!

Oh Charles!—what am I doing? Every object ſwims before me! My brain, my brain is as though it were ſplitting from its very centre! My ideas are intenſe even to phrenſy; and the bodileſs creations of my fancy are before me with a fearful, and moſt actual preſence!

Enough——
Farewell——fare——
Oh——Charles——think—

Thy friend,
EDMUND OLIVER.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

GERTRUDE SINCLAIR
TO
Mr. EDWARD D'OYLEY.

London.

It is well, my Edward, that you left me when you did; for had you remained longer in town, you would have been witneſs to a moſt affecting ſpectacle.

Poor Oliver!—Not having heard any thing of him for ſome time, I called the day before yeſterday at his lodgings. The ſervant who let me in, informed me that he was ill—very ill—in a ſtate of high fever. I entreated permiſſion to be introduced to his chamber; the window ſhutters were nearly cloſed; the curtains of his bed drawn. I approached the bed

bed—he lay motionleſs—his eyes ſealed together—and a very feeble reſpiration was the only ſymptom of remaining life. His brother (whom I had not ſeen for many years) ſtood on one ſide of the bed, looking gloomily on the ſufferer; a ſtillneſs like that of death was in the apartment—a gleam of light from the bottom of the bed, where the curtains were half uncloſed, fell on Edmund's face. After I had ſtood for ſome time I obſerved a pulſation of his cheek, and at intervals a convulſed heaving of the cheſt; then a ſtillneſs came over him, and even his reſpiration ſeemed dying away.

He had lain thus for ſome time. I was trembling with agitation; for every moment I expected that the faint breathing would not return, when ſuddenly his eyes

eyes opened—glazed and vacant; he ſtarted upright in his bed, and with a horrible groan pronounced "Gertrude!"—I ſtood petrified; nor do I remember any thing that paſſed for ſome minutes ſubſequent to this: however, when I had collected myſelf enough to return to his chamber (for I had quitted it to indulge in a momentary burſt of feeling), I found him preciſely in the ſame ſituation as before. O Edward, this diſcovery of Oliver's ſtate of mind torments and haunts me! Should he never recover, I muſt conſider myſelf his murderer. It is true I am an involuntary cauſe; however, another time I can think and reaſon—I am now more agitated than I wiſh to be.

Farewell,

GERTRUDE SINCLAIR.

LETTER XXII.

LADY GERTRUDE SINCLAIR
TO
Mr EDWARD D'OYLEY.

London.

OH Edward! I am very wretched.—My conſcience accuſes me, and I know not wherefore.—I am reſtleſs—agonized! Upon examining myſelf I find that I have acted in conformity to all thoſe ſublime and elevated notions which we have adopted. I have not been governed by appearances—no—my deſires have given ſhapes to external things; my own unbending will has furniſhed them with a character—was not this as it ſhould be, Edward? But, poor Oliver! had I not ſeen you, I might have been happy with him; but no—no—an irreſiſtible

tible neceſſity governs us; it is weakneſs to dream of what might have been; it is our buſineſs to perform the beſt poſſible, taking things as they are: But this Oliver, I cannot help thinking of him!—I have not ventured to call on him again, but have ſent to enquire of his ſituation from time to time. He continues nearly the ſame, though the laſt account informs me that he is ſomewhat mended.

Oh Edward! as ſoon as you have finiſhed your buſineſs in Briſtol, come hither. Solitude is very irkſome to me now; I fly from place to place, and endeavour, by inceſſantly energizing, to get rid of my diſquieting imbecility.—You and I have long agreed, that Mind is omnipotent, that

" the noble ſoul
Swells when the tempeſt thickens, and moſt feels
Its own ſufficiencies of happineſs,

Its plenitude of ſolitary ſtrength,
When all the puppetry of life's brief day
Has done its buſineſs."

Have long ſince acknowledged, that we ſhould be "governed by the light of circumſtance flaſhed on an independent intellect;" and that, heedleſs of paſt concluſions, and inattentive to whatever preſent ones may lead us, we ſhould proceed boldly onward in the difficult and untried path of intellectual experiment.

I ought to ſhake off this mortal wearineſs—this ſhrinking back of the ſoul:—I feel as I were the only being in exiſtence. My mind would graſp at ſomewhat, but its efforts recoil upon itſelf. Do come, Edward, we will talk of theſe things together: I want to weigh with you the convictions of my ſpirit.

GERTRUDE SINCLAIR.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

CHARLES MAURICE

TO

EDMUND OLIVER.

Ambleside.

DEAR EDMUND,

I HAVE read, with much pleaſure, your letter on the ſubject of towns and property: you know how happy I always am in concurring with you in ſentiment.

I think you need not doubt from the ſtyle of Gertrude's behaviour, and the familiar terms upon which D'Oyley ſeems with her, that he is a favoured lover; and ſhould he be, Edmund, you will never be weak enough to ſink before the trial. So far myſelf, (in conſequence of the ſketch you have given me of her cha-

racter,) am I from wiſhing to ſee you connected with her, that I ſhould regard it, notwithſtanding the vehemence of your attachment, as a poſitive evil. The impetuoſity and wildneſs of her diſpoſition, in my opinion, wholly unfit her for ſecuring domeſtic comfort.

This cruſading ſpirit, which modern philoſophy encourages, that diſpoſition of giving "an identity to imaginary aggregates," ſeems to me by no means favourable to ſocial uſefulneſs. From early aſſociation, ſimilarity of habit, and an affection inſeparable from common domeſtication, we poſſeſs an influence over certain perſons, which it is impoſſible for us to transfer to another: the attachment of a ſiſter to a brother, of a father to a ſon, or of one friend to another, is founded on the ſympathies of nature;

nature; and it ſeems to me unjuſtifiable to throw away idly the influence connected with theſe attachments, in order to reſpect more fully the conduct of general exiſtence.

The relations to certain individuals implies a power veſted in our hands by Deity, and, except in our peculiar circle there be ſome evil of enormous magnitude, it ſeems to me unjuſtifiable not to avail ourſelves of this power, in order to work upon their minds. By attempting a great deal we often do nothing: it is not looſe declamations, or an harangue of general and popular application, that will eradicate habits, diſentangle the foldings of prejudice, and regenerate the mind. No! we muſt have gained the confidence of the perſon we wiſh to reform; cultivated ſympathies with him;

and twined ourſelves round his heart. That perſon would in my opinion be aſſerting no paradox, who ſhould affirm that he is a greater man, who has ſecured virtue, and happineſs to one individual, than he, who (wanting patience and domeſtic quietneſs) makes experiments on the public mind, and is ever ſhifting from ſcene to ſcene.

The ſyſtems of the preſent day ſeem to ſuppoſe, that general happineſs is the aggregate of individual miſery. A modern writer recommends a perſon, who ſhould ſee a houſe on fire, in which a philoſopher and his own mother are contained, it being impoſſible for him to reſcue both, to effect the eſcape of the former rather than that of the latter, as a being moſt likely to be of benefit to the human race.

But

But ſuppoſe this were a general principle of action, would not mankind have ſo completely diveſted themſelves of all affection, that the deareſt ſources of happineſs would be gone? It ſeems to me a propenſity ſo inherent in our nature, to attach ourſelves to thoſe things that we have longeſt been familiar with, that without this tendency we ſhould not be human. In fact *frequent or vivid association* may ſtand for a definition of affection: we love him moſt by a neceſſity of our conſtitution, with whom our ſouls have moſt often, or moſt intenſely, come in contact. But it is ſuppoſed that this philoſopher has never been introduced to the individual, who ſaves him: now I appeal to any human being, if there muſt not be a dreadful hollowneſs in ſocial intercourſe, if thus, reverſing

the conſtitution of things, we could love him whom we have not ſeen, better than him whom we have ſeen.

I was the other day informed of a gentleman, who reproved his ſon on ſeeing him ſhudder at the ſight of a poor animal cruſhed to atoms by the ſudden cloſing of a gate; telling him "You ſhould cultivate benevolence and not feel pity."

But are not theſe qualities, by means of which we place ourſelves in the ſituation of the ſufferer, the neceſſary foundation on which as a ſuperſtructure we rear benevolent principles?—We muſt be ſentient before we can be rational beings: he therefore, who would tell me, that I muſt love a whole without attaching myſelf to parts of that whole, requires

that

that I ſhould attain an end without uſing the means, poſſeſs principles without ſentiments or impreſſions to ſupport them, and find an intereſt in what is to me objectleſs and undefined!

One individual, as a part of the maſs of exiſtence, is feeble and tottering on nothingneſs. Vanity and ſelf-adulation only teach us to depart from the proper ſphere of man. Human perfection is a ſlow proceſs. It muſt go through the patient diſcipline of domeſtic duty, and the unapplauded toils of retired life, ere it make a ſure advancement.

The kind affections of the heart languiſh and grow morbid, if they be not nouriſhed by their natural food, the occaſion of doing good offices—now the ſtate of domeſtication every day, and almoſt

moſt hourly, affords ſweet occaſion for theſe little uſeful things, called good offices and kindneſſes; and to me, my friend, theſe ſeem the neceſſary means of diſciplining ſouls by gradations ſuited to the nature of man, (which at firſt muſt be excited by palpable and well-defined objects,) to general and enlarged benevolence. Beſides, the little oppoſitions, diſappointments, and interferences, of domeſtic life, exerciſe the patience, give habits not of a brilliant virtue indeed, but of a virtue far ſuperior, a virtue that is "pure, peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be entreated," and that heedeth not the eye of the world.

I am always inclined to ſuſpect that theatrical exhibition of excellence which ſets human nature at defiance, which holds itſelf up to man as a ſpectacle calculated

culated to rouſe his paſſions, rather than level itſelf with the affections of his nature. It floats, and ſoars, and bears beyond the limits of human viſion, but it never quietly works its way amid the intricacies of trial and difficulty, never overcomes patiently the ugly and leſs ſplendid oppoſitions of the mortal path; no, it performs exploits at which the million gape, neglecting, like the character of the humble Nazarene, to adapt itſelf with unaſſuming and ſuffering patience to the detail of life.

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

ROGER OLIVER
TO
CHARLES MAURICE.

London.

SIR,

MY brother is very ill—He made ſigns to me to ſend the encloſed to you, which I have in conſequence done, though I much doubt, from the preſent ſtate of his mind, whether the contents are coherent.

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

ROGER OLIVER.

EDMUND

EDMUND OLIVER
TO
CHARLES MAURICE.

(Enclosed in the foregoing.)

COMFORT, my Charles, in this life, ſeems to increaſe as we approach to a ſtate of non-entity! to feel is but to be agonized, and every ſtep from the nothingneſs of annihilation is a proceſs of poſitive ſuffering.

I dreamt of felicity! But oh God, my dreams deceived me; for I connected vividneſs of feeling with my happineſs! I ſhaped an angel! I imagined the immenſity of exhauſtleſs fruition!

I penetrated beyond the boundaries of human poſſibility, and a wild univerſe of ever-varying delight was before me! I

mounted

mounted to the extremeſt limits of rapture, or ſunk in the moſt unutterable delirium.

Senſation trembled and thrilled in the dulleſt extremities of my frame; and my ſoul was plunged into bliſs till its very eſſence partook of extacy!

Gertrude! Gertrude! muſt I never call thee mine? muſt I never fold thee in my arms?

I have been dreaming, Gertrude, that my ſoul loſt its exiſtence, and that it became a part of thine, and that a poor wretch looked upon me, and ſcreamed out "Gertrude!" I laughed at and deſpiſed him! His countenance changed, his eyes became fixed, and he was as one dead, which moved by a miraculous agent!

agent! And he ſeized me, and he ſeized thee, for we were one: and I was filled with horror, and a mighty darkneſs came over me, and his cold hand ſmote upon my heart!

A Narrative begun by Edmund Oliver, with an intention of its being transmitted to his Friend after his death.

HAPPINESS and I muſt now for ever be at variance! There is an impaſſable gulph fixed between it and me!——Gertrude—Gertrude—Having in a great meaſure recovered from my fever, I was determined to put an end to this ſtate of horrible ſuſpence and anxiety. I ſummoned to my aſſiſtance all my ſcattered powers, and haſtened to her apartments.

From

From the violence of my attack my body was very feeble, and my brain irritable and extremely weak.

I found her at home—ſhe ſtarted back at ſeeing me enter. At the ſight of her all my reſolution was failing. To prevent the utter deſertion of my powers, I hurried up to her, ſeized her arm, and with the deſperate vehemence of frenzy cried, "Is D'Oyley your lover?"

The ſuddenneſs of my attack, and the impetuoſity of my manner, overcame her. Her countenance changed, and ſhe fell back ſenſeleſs on a ſofa which ſtood near her.

It was now my turn to be alarmed. I uſed every means to reſtore her, and in a few minutes ſucceeded. "D'Oyley—D'Oyley,"

D'Oyley," ſhe faintly exclaimed. The horrible certainty then ruſhed on my mind, and I wildly re-echoed "D'Oyley! D'Oyley!" The hollow and frightfully deſpairing tones of my voice rouſed her —ſhe fixed her eyes vacantly on me, and a tranſient expreſſion of remorſe came over her countenance.

She was ſilent for many minutes—during this time my ſoul was abſorbed, and ſummoned away by a ſtrange delirium.

At intervals ſhe ſeemed muſing, with her eyes bent on the ground—now a heaving of her boſom or a ſtruggle throughout her whole frame, indicated that ſome thought troubled her. She then turned her eyes towards me, the wild ſtare forſook them, a gliſtening moiſture ſuffuſed them, and one tear courſed her cheek,

cheek, which was next to me. I felt a thrilling from head to foot—my reaſon forſook me, and I was on the point of ſeizing her hand, and folding her to my boſom, when the door ſuddenly opened, and D'Oyley preſented himſelf before us.

He ſtood as one petrified with aſtoniſhment—"Gertrude!" at laſt he cried. "Oh Edward!" and ſhe burſt from the ſofa, and threw herſelf in his arms.

I retired to one corner of the room. "D'Oyley, look there, look there!" ſhe exclaimed, and pointed with a ſtare of madn[illegible]wards me. D'Oyley on his part was confounded. Now his countenance was dark and reſentful; now he fixed his queſtioning and half-upbraiding looks on her.

"What

"What may this mean?" ſaid he. We were ſtill ſilent, and each expreſſed by the dumb language of looks and geſtures the various and violent workings of the ſoul.

Gertrude during this time had retired to a remote part of the room. I continued in one corner ſupporting myſelf againſt the wall. D'Oyley ſtill remained with a countenance of wild amazement in the centre of the apartment.

She caſt alternate looks of horrible agony towards both of us. Her face wore an appearance of greater ſoftneſs, of unutterable ſadneſs, when ſhe turned it towards me; but when her eye caught D'Oyley's, it aſſumed an earneſtneſs and the wild vivacity of paſſion.

We

We remained in this ſituation for ſome time. Gertrude had been ſtupidly motionleſs for a few ſeconds, when ſhe ruſhed acroſs the apartment, and again throwing herſelf into D'Oyley's arms, ſhrieked out "I am thine for ever!"

From that moment I know not what became of me—I faintly remember the impreſſion which her reſolved look and manner, and her deſperate tones of voice made upon me. Upon recovering my recollection I found myſelf in a diſtant part of the city, wandering without my hat, breathleſs with fatigue, yet pacing on with incredible ſwiftneſs.

LETTER XXV.

CHARLES MAURICE
TO
EDMUND OLIVER.

Ambleside.

EDMUND, Edmund, I am alarmed for you! I have received your two laſt letters; the firſt much depreſſed, but the following one, encloſed in your brother's, has extremely agitated me.

My deareſt friend, do write immediately. If I do not hear by the next poſt that you are in a more tranquil ſtate of mind, I ſhall come up to London.

Do, my Edmund, ſtruggle againſt this yielding up of the whole ſoul to the government of paſſion. Remember the

lofty

lofty principles you profeſs, and let them miniſter to you in this trying exigence.

God be with you!

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER XXVI.

CHARLES MAURICE TO ROGER OLIVER,

Ambleside.

SIR,

I TAKE the liberty of addreſſing you, that in caſe your brother ſhould not be well enough to open my letter, you may inform me of his ſituation. The laſt letter he ſent me, encloſed in a note from you, ſhocked me extremely, as it diſcovers him to be in a moſt calamitous ſtate of mind.

I truſt,

I truſt, Sir, that you will be good enough to appriſe me of Edmund's ſituation, if he be not well enough to write himſelf.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER XXVII.

ROGER OLIVER TO CHARLES MAURICE.

London.

SIR,

I HAVE not ſeen or heard any thing of Edmund ſince laſt Monday. He had been extremely ill, but was in ſome meaſure recruited. On Sunday night, as he was returning to his chamber, I heard

him mutter to himſelf, "to-morrow and this ſuſpenſe ſhall be over!" Not knowing that any thing preſſed upon his mind, I paid no attention to the circumſtance. I have ſince often thought of it: ſurely he cannot have intended any act of deſperation.

It ſeems to me moſt probable that he is gone to join my mother and ſiſter in Worceſterſhire. I ſhall write to them by this day's poſt concerning him, for I begin to be reſtleſs and uneaſy.

Edmund always gave way to childiſh and impetuous feelings.

I am, Sir,

Your humble ſervant,

ROGER OLIVER.

P. S. Since

P. S. Since writing the above, Lady Gertrude Sinclair's ſervant has been here on the part of his miſtreſs to enquire after Edmund. I find that he called in Gower-ſtreet on Monday morning, and was ſeen by this ſervant to depart from the houſe in a moſt violent agitation, but I can gain no information whither he went from thence.

LETTER XXVIII.

ELLEN OLIVER

TO

ROGER OLIVER.

Pentonville, near Worcester.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

WE are all in a ſtate of the completeſt wretchedneſs.

Mr. Maurice arrived here yeſterday evening with your's, and the laſt letters from Edmund in his pocket.

* Your letter directed to me came to hand the day before yeſterday; *that* gave us conſiderable uneaſineſs, but as we were accuſtomed to think of Edmund as a deſerter,

* This letter is not inſerted.

a deſerter, we were reconciled with the leſs difficulty. But now that we are informed of the previouſly agitated ſtate of his mind, and have ſeen the letters directed to his friend, no words can expreſs our diſtreſs.

My mother flies from room to room, paſſionately calling out "Edmund, Edmund, my poor loſt ſon." Nor can I by any means in my power pacify her.

Mr. Maurice is going to town in the mail this evening; he will aſſiſt you in making the moſt diligent enquiry for my wretched brother.

Your affectionate

And much afflicted ſiſter,

ELLEN OLIVER.

LETTER XXIX.

CHARLES MAURICE
TO
Mrs. MAURICE.

London.

MY DEAR REBECCA,

I ARRIVED in town a few hours ago, and have called on Lady Gertrude, and on the brother of Edmund, but no intelligence have I been able to gain of him. Lady Gertrude, I learned by the ſervant, was too much indiſpoſed to ſee any one, but as my buſineſs is of ſo particular a nature, I ſhall make a ſecond attempt to gain an interview with her at a more convenient hour.

Oh Rebecca, if poor Edmund ſhould have been driven in a moment of agony to

to any raſh action! I cannot endure the thought—no, no, I am guilty of injuſtice towards him when I ſuppoſe the thing poſſible! We muſt, we will diſcover where he is! His mind muſt not be loſt! Oh Rebecca, that we had him by our fire-ſide; the quietneſs of our habitation would heal his ſpirit, and no viſitants ſhould wound "the nakedneſs of his feelings."

I know a brother of this Edward D'Oyley, who frequents Lady Gertrude's apartments. The family are wealthy Quakers of Briſtol. If when I call a ſecond time I cannot be introduced to her, I will enquire for this gentleman.

I expect to find him one of your daſhing modern democrats. A man who will talk very big of reform, and general principles, but who for the world would not

be guilty of a perſonal privation, or unpraiſed ſelf-denial. A man who wills not to *do right*, but finds that all is right which *he wills*, who has the happy talent of diſcovering that all *his desires* nicely adapt themſelves to the moſt approved calculations of moral uſefulneſs.

But why ſhould I waſte my time about theſe ſelf-created ſaviours of mankind? Poor Edmund all this time is unheard of! Wandering perhaps, the outcaſt of ſociety, from place to place: or (I hardly dare blot my paper with the ſentence) lying in ſome unknown corner, a neglected and ſelf-murdered corpſe! Oh my God, Rebecca, if it ſhould be ſo my heart will ſcarcely ſuſtain itſelf! I will weary Heaven with prayers for his preſervation!

CHARLES MAURICE.

P. S. Give a kiſs to each of my little ones.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

CHARLES MAURICE

TO

MRS. MAURICE.

London.

MY DEAR REBECCA,

THIS morning I was exceſſively terrified by the ſudden entrance of Mr. Roger Oliver into my room, (I have taken poſſeſſion of my poor friend's chamber, in order that I may be on the ſpot ſhould he re-appear) to inform me that a body had been a few hours before diſcovered in the Serpentine River.

I haſtened to the place where I was told it had been carried, and upon reaching an alley which led to the houſe, I

found that it was already choaked up with the multitude who were aſſembled from motives of curioſity.

I was endeavouring to preſs through the crowd, when I heard behind me the general cry of "make way, make way;" and on turning round, perceived four men carrying a female corpſe (for the face was partly uncovered) towards the dwelling to which I was directed.

My feelings were too much rouſed to permit me to return, though I imagined that my penetrating the throng would *now* lead to no diſcovery. I kept cloſe to the men who were carrying the body, and followed them into a houſe at the end of the alley. As I entered it, I ſaw, immediately oppoſite to the door, another body, ſcarcely concealed by white napkins

napkins which were thrown careleſsly over it.

I ſhuddered, and I believe groaned aloud at the ſight, for the eyes of all preſent were fixed upon me. I went up to the table where the ſpectacle had caught my attention, and with trembling hands drew one of the napkins from the face. Edmund's countenance was immediately before me, and a faint general reſemblance which I now diſcovered cauſed me to ſtart back with horror!

I looked once more, and finding that my imagination had given a momentary reality to my fears, I aſked of a decent looking woman who was ſobbing at my ſide, the name of the unfortunate perſon whom I was contemplating. "Ah Sir," ſaid ſhe, "it is a melancholy tale! That lady

lady who lies dead yonder, (pointing to the body on the other ſide of the room) and this poor gentleman were man and wife; nor was there ever a fonder or a truer couple. He was tutor in a gentleman's family, and fell in love with one of his patron's daughters, or rather, if report ſays true, ſhe loved him firſt. However, be that as it may, they doated on each other, and were married without the father's conſent. Now Sir, Mr. G——— had it in his power to make them happy as the day is long; for he had a mint of money; but he never ſaw his daughter more. She wrote to him, and to her brothers and ſiſters, but her letters came back unopened.

"They took a houſe in town, and Mr. Clare hoped, by writing for the magazines, and other methods befitting a man of his talents,

talents, to maintain himſelf and his wife comfortably. They ſtruggled for ſome time tolerably well, though God knows they had never much to boaſt of. At laſt poor Mr. Clare fell ſick, and his wife was big with her ſecond child. Now they had not been able to put any thing by, ſo that it went very hard with them, and they pawned one by one every piece of furniture they had, and ſtript themſelves till they were aſhamed to walk the ſtreets.

"Well, Sir, Mr. Clare's illneſs continued— (I believe it was a decline in conſequence of his ſorrows) the doctor left him, ſaying that he could do no good, but the truth was, Sir, that he got nothing by his patient. In this ſituation of things they wrote again to the father, but no anſwer came. At laſt Mrs. Clare was

delivered

delivered of a ſecond boy, but, Sir, ſhe had nothing to dreſs the poor baby in; ſo the neighbours lent her ſome rags—they could do no better, for you muſt know, Sir, we are all poor hereabouts.

"Well, Sir, the baby died—and the eldeſt ſickened and died alſo—and every body ſays that it was for want, for they had no victuals except what the poor neighbours ſent them—nor any fire—they had ſold their bed long ago—and they were too proud to beg of ſtrangers, and no one knew them in London who could aſſiſt them.

"Matters had gone on thus, Sir, for a month, till the day before yeſterday, on my going to the door, to take a little hot broth for Mrs. Clare, I found it faſtened; I called, but no one anſwered me. On this

this I alarmed the neighbours, and we burſt open the door. The houſe was ſtript of every thing, and all we could find was this paper, Sir, ſtuck in yonder caſement."

I took the paper, and on opening it, read theſe words:—

"This is written to inform the perſon into whoſe hands the paper may fall, that ſick of life, deſerted by every one, deſtitute of all the means of ſupport, and unacquainted with any reſources for the future—wretched ourſelves, and deprived of the power of communicating comfort to others—we have come to the reſolution of ending together our miſerable exiſtence.

"If

"If a good Samaritan find this, our characters will not be blotted with infamy; if an evil perſon, (and ſuch beings it has been our lot almoſt excluſively to meet with,) our names will but ſuffer the injuſtice which thoſe who bore them can endure no longer!—We have *been bleſt*, and we have *been wretched*; we have *lived*, and we will *die* together.

"*Lewis and Caroline Clare.*"

I left ſome money with the poor woman; (her artleſs expreſſion of attachment to theſe unfortunate people intereſted me,) and then made the beſt of my way through the crowd.

How happy are we, my Rebecca, who inhabit the more remote parts of the iſland, in being removed from hourly ſights of miſery like this!

We

We converſe with God himſelf—He affects our hearts in the wonderful beauties of this ſtupendous univerſe! If when we hear a ſound, perceive a ſhape, and catch the imbecil meaning which human nature can attach to words, we inſtantly affirm the exiſtence of an active agent, how much more ſhall we do this, and how much higher muſt we claſs that Agent, who ſpeaks to us in the mountain and the valley, the rock, and the mighty waters; in the varions combinations of ſhape and colour, and all the unutterable harmonies of the natural world! Oh my Rebecca, thank the Father of all our mercies, that we are removed from ſpectacles of vice, which harden, from deformities which debauch, and from the vexations of buſtling life which annihilate, the feelings and intellect of man!

I have

I have juſt received a letter from Miſs Oliver. She is much depreſſed by her brother's diſappearance. By the way, my Rebecca, you would be extremely delighted with Ellen; her countenance is the ſweeteſt I ever ſaw. Her eyes are of a mild blue, expreſſive of great ſenſibility, and a beholder might ſay of her that "faith and meek quietneſs, and innocent loves, and maiden purity," had made their abode in her boſom.

Her couſin Edith joins to theſe intereſting qualities, poſſeſſed in as high a degree, maturity of judgment, the quick diſcrimination of genius, with a well-informed and ſtrong mind. Theſe amiable girls adore each other and

"grow together
Like to a double cherry ſeeming parted
But yet at union in partition."

I have

I have been calling again on Lady Gertrude, and obtained the favour of an interview.

I found her, and Mr. D'Oyley together. She was apprized of Oliver's elopement by means of his brother's ſervant, who, I find, takes care to communicate daily to her ladyſhip the iſſue of our reſearches.

She anſwers completely to Oliver's deſcription—her ſoul is without doubt lofty and aſpiring. An impetuoſity of feeling, and a fiery daringneſs of ſpirit, ſeem her chief characteriſtics.

When I mentioned Edmund's name, (which I was obliged to do in order to gain ſome clue, by means of which I might

might gueſs at his determinations, ſubſequent to his calling upon her,) ſhe ſeemed much embarraſſed. She looked at D'Oyley as if ſhe wiſhed him out of the room. At laſt, with ſome heſitation ſhe ſaid, "Sir, I fear that I have been unfortunate enough to intereſt your friend: he had expreſſed in no equivocal terms his paſſion, when Mr. D'Oyley entered; (whom I now conſider as the ſole poſſeſſor of my affections.) A few minutes after Mr. D'Oyley's appearance, during the conſequent confuſion to all parties, he hurried from the houſe, leaving us ſo much confounded by his manner, that we never thought of tracing his footſteps till he had been long out of ſight."

Thus was my application here completely unſatisfactory; and I returned home with a heart ill at eaſe.

God

God bleſs my Rebecca, and my ſweet children.

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER XXXI.

CHARLES MAURICE TO Mrs. MAURICE.

London.

STILL, my deareſt Rebecca, there are no tidings of Edmund!

Mr. Oliver and I have uſed every poſſible means to find him out, but to no purpoſe. We traverſe the ſtreets from morning till night; and if by chance I ſee a face, or a figure at all reſembling his

his, my heart beats as if it would leap from my boſom; till in the end from hope frequently excited, and as often repreſſed, I am exhauſted even to melancholy.

Had I not, from contemplating the tendencies of things, learned to believe that all works together for good, I ſhould find no reſource in theſe trying diſpenſations. But to him, who believes (having in ninety-nine caſes diſcovered, that the greateſt poſitive calamity produces a ſum of happineſs, which could not have been otherwiſe introduced,) that even the moſt obſcure and myſterious viſitations of providence are the precurſors of felicity; who only thinks of mortal evil as a neceſſary concomitant of mortal imperfection; to him who (truſting in an infinitely benevolent being that preſides over the univerſe,)

univerſe,) looks upon every circumſtance and ſituation as ſteps which "lead gradual to his Father's throne;" and who thinks of phyſical and intellectual calamity as the "eyeleſs drudges" of a providence ſanctifying their operations, to ſuch a perſon no misfortune appears irreparable, no evil omnipotent—the moſt impenetrable gloom becomes as the noonday for exceeding brightneſs!

My Rebecca, let us dwell on theſe glorious principles: Let us annihilate the preſent evil in contemplating the coming perfection: let us deem of every being that is, and of every circumſtance that occurs, *as good*, and highly to be valued, ſinking its individual character in the ſublime maſs of things, which (God be praiſed) we have long learned to love and admire.

There

There can be but one poſitively perfect and happy Exiſtence in the univerſe; and he is the Maker of it. To ſuppoſe a ſecond being equal to him, implies a contradiction. He is the ſupreme reality: evil and good to us, to inferior beings, are relative terms, denoting leſs or greater degrees of pleaſure: to the man, who has been accuſtomed to ten degrees of happineſs, five are a poſitive calamity; but to him who has been habituated to two, this ſame five would be an ineſtimable bleſſing. No two exiſtences can exactly reſemble each other; this would imply a ſimilarity of bearings in every reſpect to other exiſtences, ſo that they muſt partake of each other's identity, or in other words, would become the ſame being. Now God being the author of inferior exiſtence; unchangeable, ſubject to no limitations of time

time or place, he alone has poſitive attributes, and in conſequence poſitive happineſs. The enjoyment of exiſtences, *not God*, muſt be finite and mutable; but if they each of them have pleaſures adapted to their ſeveral natures; if health be more common to them than ſickneſs, happineſs than miſery, and if theſe latter afflictions ſeem but the benevolent means of heightening the oppoſite enjoyment; each ought to be thankful to him that made him, not daring, even in the moſt trying exigencies, to ſay "it were better for me not to have been born."

That the preponderency of good is diſcoverable in the univerſe is to me moſt evident. To reaſon with a man who denies it is a uſeleſs taſk. Our foundations are diſſimilar; we have no common

principles to from: what to me is an axiom is to him a diſputable point: he wants a ſenſe which it is not in my power to give him.

Virtue and happineſs are affairs of calculation. But where there is finiteneſs, and a reaſon not ready furniſhed with data on every occaſion, there muſt be error of judgment and conſequent vice: (for I deem of all guilt and miſery, as falſe concluſions brought into action, and aſſuming an external ſhape.) Now man is ſeldom provided with ſure principles; at his birth he is ignorant of all things; the pain then that we ſuffer ſeems but commenſurate with our miſtakes, by this means a benevolent God puſhes us on to another effort, till we have found out the ſure path; thus, by experience which brings things home to our boſom, and makes

makes them part of ourſelves, he guides us (and I believe with the leaſt poſitive ſuffering) from very nothingneſs to the capacity of contemplating his own illimitable perfections; and at laſt, having travelled through the different ſtages of experiment deſtined for finite intelligences, of loſing ourſelves in the unchangeable Living One.

If it be aſked why more materials for judgment are not given us, and thus our erroneous concluſions obviated from the beginning, I would reply, that according to the preſent ſtate of the intellectual univerſe, nothing ſeems properly appropriated to the mind which has not formed a part of its individual experience. This is a neceſſity, according to which every part of the univerſe is framed; now, as that univerſe is upon the whole good, I

deem of its author as good, and of any neceſſity introduced into that univerſe, and coming from that author, as good alſo, ſtill keeping in mind the general tendencies and indications of things.

Thus finding good in the effect, I conſider the ſecond cauſes as benevolent, and the cauſe of theſe cauſes (to whoſe operation I can trace no limits) as benevolence itſelf. Or in other words, finding tendencies to happineſs every where, I conſider the creator of them as poſſeſſing general moral attributes; and not being able to diſcover any ſyſtem which would admit of more benevolent tendencies, I ſuppoſe the exiſting one the beſt poſſible; i. e. framed in conformity, not to a created and after-produced neceſſity, but to one exiſting in the divine mind itſelf; for ſurely a being who would give birth

to

to ninety-nine degrees of happineſs (after the ſum of mixed happineſs and miſery is deduced) would, were it compatible with his nature, produce the hundredth.

God then cannot, becauſe he wills not, and he wills not becauſe his wiſdom and benevolence forbid it, diſcipline ſouls, ſave

> "by trial of pain,
> And all the hard inflictions which correct
> Our carnal longings."

Let us, then, rejoice in tribulation, and "count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations."

I know that my Rebecca loves theſe diſquiſitions from me; this has taken

my mind from the ſubject which oppreſſes it—it will ſerve her too for an hour's meditation.

Farewell,

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER XXXII.

CHARLES MAURICE TO MRS. MAURICE.

London.

MY DEAR REBECCA,

I AM wearied with conjecture—— Edmund is ſurely gone—gone for ever!

I have called a third time on Lady Gertrude, for I wiſh to ſift her ſoul with regard

regard to Edmund. D'Oyley was again there. How ſhe could prefer him to my friend is inconceivable. The man has a fine perſon, is brilliant in his manners, nay even paſſionate in his looks and geſtures, when he addreſſes her; but there is nothing to be traced in him of the profundities of feeling, of the unutterable fervour, and ever-varying ſuſceptibilities of Edmund's ſoul.

This D'Oyley's language is flowing—his manners confident—his metaphors quick and ſurpriſing—and his alluſions rich and various; but his generalizing principles would for ever incapacitate him for diſcovering the ſecret weakneſſes and ſores of human nature, ſo that he might apply, with metaphyſical ſubtlety, the convenient and appropriate remedy.

Oh my Edmund, my Edmund! my ſoul yearns after thee! You have heard me mention, my Rebecca, that as we rambled through the ſcenes of Switzerland, his ſociety was ever my chiefeſt ſource of enjoyment. His quick and delicate feelings ſeized every ſhape, every combination of nature with ſuch indeſcribable avidity. He peopled it, tenanted it inſtantaneouſly with beings, with modes ſo nicely adapted to its character! A view was not merely a view to him! It was a ſcene where he formed plans, conceived new ſchemes of ſociety, imagined ſuitable characters, ſketched out day-dreams of unheard of happineſs, and embodied the unſhaped ſenſations of his fervent ſpirit! Oh Rebecca, that that man ſhould be loſt! His ſoul was of inexhauſtible value! In ſpite of my philoſophy

philoſophy I could ſob aloud when I think what he has been to me.

Then thoſe letters, Rebecca—thoſe letters which he has ſent me ſince our return to England! I never ſhall forget that evening when the firſt of them was delivered to us; it was juſt after ſupper. We drew round our fire, (for it was a damp evening) we got a freſh bottle of your laſt year's currant wine, and we ſat reading till our ſouls were abſorbed; we awoke as from a dream—the tears were courſing our cheeks—oh Rebecca, what an evening that was! poor Edmund!

If I hear not of him in a few days I ſhall return to Ambleſide, you need not expect in that caſe to receive another letter from me. Oh God, with what heavineſs ſhall I retrace my road!

I forgot to tell you that D'Oyley and I had a long converſation on the ſubject of democrats, and political non-reſiſtance.

He was indulging in ſome very ſanguinary wiſhes with regard to the preſent miniſters and governors of this country—I interrupted him by ſaying, "It ſeems to me, Sir, that the evil lies deeper than you imagine. The whole maſs, I grant with you, is tainted by corruption, and let me add, with corruption it ever will be tainted while each man has a ſelfiſh and individual aim in ſociety. What! ſhall we praiſe the induſtry of the merchant who proſecutes his profeſſion, and pretends to be toiling for his family after he has accumulated forty-times the ſum requiſite for their maintenance, a family too, whoſe artificial wants he himſelf has created? Shall we praiſe the monopolizing

lizing landholder who engroſſes a track of country that would maintain thouſands, and pampers his own ſwoln carcaſe even to ſatiety with the produce; and think him a benefactor to his country if he ſuffer a train of half-fed beings to glean their ſlender pittance from the cultivation of his fields? Throughout the whole of the ſyſtem ſhall we recommend induſtry with a view to perſonal aggrandizement? Shall we pay reſpect to rank, and proportion the bending of our bodies to the artificial gradation; and then condemn thoſe who (having all their life-time been brought up on theſe principles, having been taught that elevation of character is commenſurate with eminence of ſtation) are fortunate enough to reach the apex of the ſocial pyramid?

We

"We diſcipline the hearts of all men to ſelfiſhneſs; we pamper the pride of all by our ſervility when they have gained their end; the purſuit of perſonal emolument is recommended to the million; and to the few only who meet with the greateſt ſucceſs we refuſe our approbation. It is not love of human kind, it is envy, it is a ſpirit of revenge that makes us thus talk of the *last agents* in a corrupt proceſs. We make monſtrous ſituations, and then complain if monſters fill them. But human nature muſt be acted on by motives; if a being, then, find that in his entrance on life all the reſpect and power is attached to a *mere ſituation* which he can ever hope to gain, what is it that ſhall influence him to further endeavours? For my part, Sir, ſo far am I from wondering at the vices of kings and governors, that ſeeing their perverting

ſtations

ſtations in ſociety, and knowing the weakneſſes of human nature, I rather marvel that they are not more enormouſly wicked."

"But Sir," anſwered Mr. D'Oyley, "human nature never can be actuated by the pure motives you allude to: a general benevolence, as an active principle, can only be gained by a favoured few. But yet, Sir, though I cannot agree with you in wiſhing to level all ranks, and confound perſons and property, I ardently deſire to ſee the more enormous evils done away, and an equality of rights introduced."

"Equality of rights!" anſwered I; "do not amuſe yourſelf with a mere phraſe! We come in contact with the inſtitutions of our country but ſeldom. It

It imports little whether in a criminal proceſs I and the neighbouring Lord be tried by the ſame laws, and allowed the privilege of Jury. It is a thouſand to one that I be ever in this predicament. But the reſpect which I meet with in ſociety; the conſequence that I feel myſelf of to my fellow men; my aſſurance, wherever I go, that I ſhall find equals, and brethren; my dependance upon daily bread, a warm home, and an hoſpitable houſhold for myſelf and family; theſe, Sir, or their oppoſites, are what make human beings happy or miſerable: in the preſent unequal diviſion millions muſt be deſtitute of theſe things: talk to theſe wretches, I beſeech you, of the bleſſing of equal rights! wretches whoſe bodies are emaciated, whoſe minds are ſtarved by the cold blightings of ignorance; whoſe diſpoſitions are rendered,

by

by uniform oppreſſion, rapacious and brutal; and whoſe very exiſtence is but protracted miſery, perhaps ſcarcely one degree leſs dreadful to them than the darkneſs of the tomb!"

"But Sir," rejoined Mr. D'Oyley, "how is this to be effected? Were property equalized to day, the old diſtinctions would be ſet up to-morrow, with the addition of contention, cruelty, and horrible confuſion."

"This would be my plan," ſaid I, "I would exactly reverſe the method of our modern democrats, who (neglecting the vineyard of their own hearts) are always attacking bodies of men, yet even avoid wreſtling with human nature itſelf; who are perpetually declaiming for reform, yet indulge

dulge in their own perſons all thoſe vices and paſſions which make ariſtocratical inſtitutions ſo eminently neceſſary. Who care little for reſcinding their wants, leſſening their phyſical encroachments, getting rid of the pride of ſelf, and a monopolizing ſpirit; (defects which are, the very panders to ariſtocratical influence), yet are anxiouſly ſcrupulous to maintain the paraphernalia of their ſect, who will be putting on a green cravat, dragging the coach of an oppoſition member, writing letters for the mere purpoſe of introducing "my dear citizen," and bellowing to a mob who can boaſt of nothing but paſſion, and brute turbulence!"

"I would exactly reverſe, Sir, theſe methods: I would adopt a principle of political

political non-reſiſtance: I would recommend to each man in his particular ſphere (firſt diſciplining his own habits) to introduce moral reform, and an unaſſuming ſteadineſs of virtue. Believing, Sir, that no good, however apparently deſirable it may be, that is effected by force can be laſting, as in that caſe it cannot have appropriated itſelf to the minds of men by individual experience; I would deſiſt from meddling with political bodies, and conforming to a ſyſtem of complete paſſiveneſs, wind myſelf into the boſoms of my neighbours; attack the root of the evil, the ſelfiſhneſſes of human nature; I would excite my friends to follow the example, and truſting that the proceſs of amelioration thus begun, would make a *ſure* though *ſlow* advancement, I would conſider myſelf as a co-operator with in-

finite

finite benevolence, and ſhould look forward with hope to the glorious day when all wars and fightings, and their neceſſary cauſes, diſtinction of rank and perſon, ſhould be baniſhed from the earth!"

"Yet Sir," I continued, "I ſtill deem of thoſe ardent and active ſpirits, who "ſtung to rage by pity," come forward in theſe perilous times as uſeful in their day."

"Every evil has its adapted remedy. Theſe are ſent forth to rouſe the nations when ſunk in eaſe, and the ſlothfulneſs of proſperity; but they ſeldom or never poſſeſs that patient, perſevering, and ſubdued virtue, which capacitates them for moulding the unweildy maſs which they have diſorganized: no—this muſt be done

done by the quiet followers of an unaſſuming maſter, who ſaid "reſiſt not evil!"

God bleſs my Rebecca!

CHARLES MAURICE.

P. S. I have heard again and again from Miſs Oliver; ſhe ſeems almoſt in an agonized ſtate of mind.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

CHARLES MAURICE
TO
MRS. MAURICE.

London.

MY DEAR REBECCA,

I KNOW not how long I may remain in town. Nothing has been heard of Edmund, indeed we have given him up. I have received a letter to day from Miſs Oliver. She mentions the ſudden death of her mother: her mind, poor girl, ſeems almoſt to ſink beneath her ſorrows. I intend going to ſee her, and endeavour to perſuade her to accompany me to Ambleſide when I leave town. But I am delaying the chief buſineſs of my letter. Lady Gertrude ſent for me yeſterday: on entering the room I diſcovered

vered that her eyes were red with weeping; her face was palé: ſhe was alone; and in a recumbent poſture on a ſofa.

"Mr. Maurice," ſhe cried, "I have taken the liberty of requeſting your company this morning, in order to learn whether you have yet heard any thing of Edmund." I replied that all our reſearches had hitherto proved fruitleſs.

She ſat after this in a dead ſilence for a conſiderable time. Her countenance expreſſed great agitation; her eyes became almoſt wild; and the colour on her cheek continually changed.

"Sir," (at laſt ſhe exclaimed in a faltering voice) "I fear much that he is gone for ever!" The tears came in her eyes, and ſhe ſobbed aloud. "He left this

this room a month ago in a ſtate of the moſt violent agitation."

"Four years ago he and I, from living in the neighbourhood of each other, and a family connection, were in the habit of ſeeing each other daily; and he profeſſed an attachment to me, which I returned."

"He wrote to me for ſome time after a ſeparation had taken place, which family arrangements made neceſſary; but his correſpondence gradually declined, and I took it for granted that new and more vivid impreſſions had effaced the feelings of his youth."

"Indeed, for a year and a half paſt, ever ſince the misfortunes of his family, (which you, Sir, are doubtleſs acquainted with)

with) we ſuppoſed that Edmund was no more."

"Never, believe me, was I ſo much agitated as at his re-appearance. We had had ſeveral interviews when he was ſeized with his late violent indiſpoſition. I was informed of his ſituation by means of his brother's ſervant: in conſequence I called upon him, and during that viſit my fears were confirmed. His paſſionate manner of pronouncing my name, while apparently he lay in a ſtate not far removed from death, put it beyond all doubt that his mind was poſſeſſed with my idea. From that time I intended to avoid meeting him; for, Mr. Maurice, (and ſhe ſeized my arm wildly as ſhe ſpoke) I was engaged to another."

The

The day of his diſappearance he called upon me, and by a moſt frantic manner, rather than any profeſſions, declared his paſſion. In the height of his agony *another*, a *third person* (why did ſhe not mention his name?) entered: and in a few minutes Edmund ruſhed out of the room, with the agitation of one deſpairing. There he ſtood, Sir, the moment previous to his departure."—She pointed to a corner of a room; her voice became choaked, her breath failed her, and ſhe burſt again into tears.

We remained in mute confuſion,—neither of us daring to break the ſilence for ſome time, until at laſt Lady Gertrude ſaid faintly, "How long do you ſtay in town?" "To-morrow is the laſt day," I replied. She looked bewildered,

and

and diſconcerted, then, with more embarraſſment than before—"Will you be good enough to remain here a few days longer—I ſhould eſteem it a particular favour: my brother is now in Scotland, and I fear that I may ſtand in need of a friend ere it be long."

She was much affected as ſhe ſpoke the laſt ſentence. I inſtantly ſignified my willingneſs, and indeed eagerneſs, to ſerve her in any poſſible way. She bowed her head, and withdrew.

On quitting the apartment ſhe looked at me with an earneſt gratitude, and, as the door cloſed, I heard her groan deeply. Finding that ſhe did not return, I left the houſe, and intend calling again to morrow.

What can this mean, Rebecca? I am weary of conjecture.

God bleſs you!

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER XXXIV.

CHARLES MAURICE TO MRS. MAURICE.

London.

MY DEAR REBECCA,

I AM bewildered! perplexed! Lady Gertrude's manner becomes more and more agitated, and her earneſtneſs for my ſtay encreaſes with her ſuffering.

I called

I called again yeſterday. She was ſtill alone. "And the murderer of Edmund," I heard her exclaim, as I entered the room. She was much embarraſſed at my ſudden appearance.

What can this mean, Rebecca?—"The murderer of Edmund." Surely her lover D'Oyley has not taken the vengeance of a rival? This cannot be! But his ſudden diſappearance, and Gertrude's agony of mind!—I am much diſturbed; there is a myſterioufneſs in her manner which I cannot account for.

After ſhe had in ſome degree conquered her agitation, ſhe bade me ſit by her. "I am very wretched," ſhe ſaid; "and I have it not in my power to tell you the cauſe of that wretchedneſs: another perſon's fate is invol——," involved

ſhe would have ſaid.—I looked at her. Her countenance was become wild, fearfully wild.

"Mr. Maurice," ſhe cried, after a ſhort pauſe, "will you excuſe theſe incoherencies? I *would* ſay ſomething, but I cannot!"

We then ſat in ſilence for ſome time. I was beginning a ſentence in which Edmund's name was introduced. "Don't mention him!" ſhe exclaimed, and riſing from her ſeat paced the room in the greateſt emotion.

I ſtill remained with her half an hour; but ſhe never ſpoke. Her face and geſtures, during the whole time, indicated a mind deeply troubled.

God bleſs you!

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

CHARLES MAURICE
TO
MRS. MAURICE.

London.

MY DEAR REBECCA,

HER conduct is unaccountable! I have called every day for this week paſt, and not once have I been admitted to her preſence. Yet twice has ſhe ſent me a ſhort note, entreating me to ſtay in town. * * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * * * *

My fears are confirmed! Oliver is dead. He has fallen by the hands of D'Oyley. To-day I have ſeen her; ſhe was dreſſed in mourning. He being her couſin this was to be expected.

A letter was lying before her; on a part which was open, my eyes caught theſe words: "in conſequence of his wounds he died the day before yeſterday." I turned pale I believe, for I felt as if life were forſaking me. She gueſſed at the cauſe of my agitation, haſtily ſeized the paper, and put it into her pocket. Her manner became delirious, and ſhe ſunk back, as one dying, in her chair. I rung for her ſervant. She was conducted to her chamber. A phyſician was ſent for, who pronounced her in great danger. I remained two hours in the houſe, but ſhe was ſtill quite inſenſible.

* * * * * * * * *

Oh God, Rebecca! I read his fate wherever I go. On looking over an old paper, I met with this paragraph, which relates the circumſtance, as anſwering

ſwering in date to D'Oyley's diſappearance, who muſt have met Edmund in town.

"Laſt week two Gentlemen fought with piſtols in Hyde Park. One of them (whoſe name is unknown) was much wounded, and it is feared that he will not recover."

That any man ſhould act thus makes me ſhudder; but that Edmund ſhould incur ſuch guilt is ſcarcely to be endured!

I cannot leave town till Lady Gertrude's ſituation is leſs alarming.

Your's ever,

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER XXXVI.

CHARLES MAURICE
TO
MRS. MAURICE.

London.

DEAR REBECCA,

ANOTHER week has paſſed, and Gertrude remains very ill. I have ſeen her but once;—her countenance was ſunk—her eyes had aſſumed an unnatural glare—ſhe raved inceſſantly—now calling on Edmund, now on D'Oyley, and ſometimes joining their names with a fearful wildneſs.

Of D'Oyley I have heard nothing.—I ſuppoſe, that ſince the death of Edmund he has left the country. This horrible, this unnatural practice, which ſacrifices lives and godlike powers to a point

point of etiquette, or a momentary vengeance, makes me ſhudder. Oh my Rebecca! what but the hope of an hereafter, the conſciouſneſs of an approving Deity, could make us perſevere in this mortal path, but

> " it is the will
> Of man's great Author, that thro' good and ill
> Calm he ſhould hold his courſe."

I ſcarcely ever ſee Roger Oliver; he is a dark and gloomy miſanthrope: he ſpeaks but in monoſyllables.

He has felt for, though he ſaid but little of, his *rash brother*—for ſo he calls Edmund.

Do not, my love, let yourſelf be caſt down by this uniformity of gloomy narration, which I ſend you. We are both of us, I truſt, prepared to endure any of

the chaſtiſements of our heavenly Father. We have both, I truſt, gained a ſubdued and acquieſcing wiſdom, from each of us having met with, in youth, the ſad, though beneficial diſcipline of calamity.

My deareſt Rebecca,

Farewell,

CHARLES MAURICE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVII.

CHARLES MAURICE
TO
MRS. MAURICE.

London.

MY DEAR REBECCA,

POOR Edmund! is it thus that thou haſt ended thy life! Unfriended, the victim of oppreſſed feelings, thou haſt ſhuffled off the burden of exiſtence.

Yeſterday I went to Clapham, to tranſact a little buſineſs with a gentleman who lives on the common. On my return, in traverſing the Borough, I found myſelf very thirſty. I entered a pot-houſe, and ſat myſelf (as is my cuſtom) in the kitchen. The voice of the landlady ſoon caught my attention.

"Lord,

"Lord, Sir, he was mad!—he uſed to look ſo—and then he would be muttering to himſelf, and often at nights I have heard him walking backwards and forwards in his room—for my part, Sir, I was very glad when he went, for you know, Sir, it is not pleaſant to have a madman in one's houſe."

"But where did he go to?" enquired an elderly gentleman, to whom the landlady addreſſed her converſation.

"Oh! for that matter I neither knows nor cares:—he had received a note the day before he went off: all the night he was walking about his room, as I ſaid before. He paid the bill, *that* was what we had to mind, and then went ſheer off, and God be praiſed that he did, for I was heartily ſick of his melancholy looks; whenever

whenever he came before me, I had as lieve ſeen a ghoſt."

Theſe inuendoes of the landlady excited my attention, and turning to her, I aſked of whom ſhe was ſpeaking.

"Lord, Sir, of a man nobody knows who, that came here ſix weeks ago. He lived in that parlour above a month, and left us this day fortnight."

This anſwer rouſed me. "But I have particular reaſons for wiſhing to know who he was, and if you can give me any information, you ſhall be amply rewarded."

"Well, if it concarns you as much as that comes to, I can tell you that he left a parcel here, and has never called for

for it; come along with me, and I will ſhew it to you."

At theſe words I aroſe from my ſeat, and the landlady led the way up a narrow, and dark pair of ſtairs, to a filthy and half-furniſhed bed room. The hangings were of a dirty check—the floor, which a worn-out rug at the foot of the bed ſcarcely concealed, was worm-eaten and rotten. The walls had been white-waſhed, but the plaiſter was now peeling off in ſeveral places. A large timber cheſt, and a few disfigured pictures, repreſenting the parable of the Prodigal Son, were the only furniture, except the bed.

I remained examining the room, while the landlady went into an adjoining one for the packet. She preſently entered; and

and what was my aſtoniſhment at ſeeing, on the back of the paper, the hand writing of Edmund! I had nearly fallen on the ſpot: the woman perceived my agitation. "Lord, Sir, I did not know it was any *concarnment* of your's, or I—I—would not have ſpoken ſo—he was a kind-hearted gentleman."

I interrupted her awkward apology, put half a guinea into her hand, and, on reaching my lodging, read the following narrative of my loſt friend.

"*Tuesday.*

"I continued marching backwards and forwards, running up one ſtreet, and down another, and traverſing, with panting agony, the windings of this city, till at laſt, quite exhauſted; and ſeized with a ſudden

a ſudden and inexplicable impulſe, I threw myſelf into a pot-houſe in the Borough.

"The firſt thing I did was to call for ſpirits; of theſe I took plentiful draughts unmingled with water. I hated the ſight of a human face, chiefly of one that I knew; and the ſevere and cold manner of my brother, to whom I never could communicate my feelings, would have been at this time horribly oppreſſive.

"I deſired to be conducted to a chamber immediately; and being ſhewn into this confined and unwholeſome cell, I threw myſelf on the bed, and yielded to all the tortures of my ſoul.

"After

"After enduring ſtruggles of miſery that cannot he exceeded, I fell into a ſtupor; nor am I at this moment aware of what paſt within me, till the morning's light, and the hoarſe vociferations of the landlord, reſtored me to myſelf.

"Having called for pen and paper, I have employed myſelf in noting down all the ſenſations and circumſtances, that I can remember, of the laſt twenty-four hours; but Heaven only knows whether this narrative, which I mean to continue from day to day, will ever reach the hands of ——————."

"*Wednesday Evening.*

"I have not yet ſtirred from my chamber. I ſhrink from the idea of meeting a human countenance. This dark room, this comfortleſs bed, this drearineſs

drearineſs of ſurrounding objects,—is more endurable than the gariſhneſs of beauty, than the mockery of comfort which my heart cannot admit.

"Oh Ellen, Ellen! what wilt thou think of thy brother? Charles, what will be thy feelings, when thou heareſt not from me?

"I have ſome laudanum in my pocket. I will quell theſe mortal upbraidings!—I cannot endure them!

"I hear the faint ſound of diſtant bells. Their chime ſaddens my heart. I wiſh to forget the exiſtence of any other being beſides myſelf. Theſe remembrancers tell me of happineſs of which I am no partaker. The gentleſt noiſe, the leaſt change of attitude in the objects

objects around me, ſeems to bring a new ſeries of exiſtence. I am like a ſpirit which has juſt tranſmigrated from one ſtate of being to another. I retain a few evaneſcent ſhades of the paſt, but they quickly fly over me, and are forgotten.

"I cannot put an end to this life, for a revolting from change, for a dull ſtupor lie heavy upon me. It ſeems as though a ſpirit guided me to ſome inevitable end. My own ideas and notions are gone, and Providence himſelf ſeems miraculouſly preſent in each particular function. The vacancy, the ſtillneſs of death are upon me!

"Of all the beings whom the unſlumbering eye of Deity will viſit this night, ſurely no one is more forlorn, more deſolate

ſolate of hope, more cut off from his fellows, than I!"

"*Friday Morning.*

"Laſt night, after a day ſpent in vacancy, or the ſtarts of a frenzied imagination, I went down ſtairs. I fancied that I ſhould enjoy the ſight of a fire, for there is not a grate in my apartment.

"Finding no perſon in the kitchen, I entered it with the more boldneſs, and ſtood by the fire, whoſe light caſt a faint glimmering throughout the otherwiſe unillumined apartment. The evening was ſet in, and rainy. On turning however, towards the door, I perceived a motionleſs figure leaning againſt the wall, where he remained for ſome time contemplating me. He was dreſſed in a thread-bare ſuit of black; his hat was in his hand as though

though he were in the attitude of devotion; thin raven hair, parted on the middle of his head, hung in ſtraight locks down each ſide of his face, and partly concealed his ſallow cheeks, made more ghaſtly by high and prominent cheek bones; his eyes, which were of an unnatural brightneſs, ſtarted from their ſockets, and a wild melancholy beamed throughout his countenance.

"Are you Edmund Oliver?" ſaid he. Startled at hearing my name pronounced where I was certain of not being known, I was for ſome time ſilent. His countenance and figure meanwhile aſſumed a more commanding aſpect. He fixed his eyes on mine, an expreſſion of inquiſitorial authority animated them, and in a louder voice he again exclaimed, "Are you Edmund Oliver?"

"I felt

"I felt intimidated, and in ſomewhat of a tremulous accent anſwered "Yes."

"Know then," ſaid the ſtranger (his face and geſtures aſſuming the fixed magiſty of inſpiration) "that I am ſent by God to warn you of the approaching deſolation." I ſtood petrified. "The conſummation of all things is at hand; the godly will be ſeparated from the ungodly; Heaven has looked with pity upon you, and choſen me to warn you to flee from the wrath to come."—I was ſtill ſilent.—"An angel informed me of your name, and bade me purſue your ſteps till you arrived at this houſe, where I was to unfold my miſſion. I have watched your goings in and your goings out; I followed you inviſibly, in all your wanderings, on the morning of your arrival here, and I have waited for this opportunity

(for

(for now the appointed hour is come) to invite you to the company of the Saints, for whom God will notably manifeſt himſelf. This day month you will ſee me again."

"This addreſs confounded me; and I was ſtupified with amazement, when the ſtranger ſtole away as imperceptibly as he had at firſt gained admittance.

"For ſome time (ſo much agitated had I been by this adventure) I was not aware of his departure: his words ſtill echoed in my ear, and his figure was ſtill before me.

"At laſt I awoke as from a trance, and ſtepping towards the place from whence the ſound came, (for I began to diſbelieve the report of my ſenſes,) I found

found that not any one was there. The room was now gloomy and almoſt dark: the rain fell faſter and faſter, and beat violently againſt the windows: the dreary red light of dying embers juſt glimmered around me, and gave a viſible drearineſs to the ſurrounding objects.

"In a few minutes the landlord entered the kitchen; and preſently ſeveral gueſts, in order to paſs the evening.—Liquor was called for, the fire was mended, candles were lighted;—the ſilence that ſo lately reigned in the houſe was baniſhed, and I retired to my apartment, ſo bewildered with this quick tranſition of appearances that I almoſt doubted the reality of what had paſſed before me.

"During

"During the reſt of the evening, and throughout the whole of the night, I was too much agitated to arrange my feelings; the ſtrange and impreſſive figure of the Unknown was before me, and his voice rung continually in my ears.

"Morning is now arrived, and I am utterly at a loſs to account for the circumſtance: I have aſſociated with no one in London: my name muſt be utterly unknown: this man's figure is too remarkable for me to have forgotten it, had I ever before ſeen him. I am altogether perplexed and bewildered."

" *Saturday.*

" I have heard nothing more of this myſterious perſonage. My brain phrenſied with its own workings—I will again have recourſe to my laudanum, and lie down."

[Here follows a chaſm of a fortnight in the narrative.]

" *Monday.*

" Almighty God! that woman—that woman!

" I have been for theſe three days paſt too much confuſed to continue this journal. I will now endeavour to collect the incidents which I have met with.

" Previous to laſt Saturday, I had, in deſcending to the kitchen, frequently obſerved

ſerved a female, who, whenever I entered the room, eyed me with a frightful fixedneſs. There were traces of former beauty in her face and figure: her eye was full and dark; but large features become more coarſe from the injuries of the weather: a ſwarthy complexion, and long black hair, gave an appearance of ſavage wildneſs to her countenance; though the expreſſion was mingled with a ſadneſs which beſpoke her rather diſciplined to her preſent nature by misfortune than early inclination. A ſtout fellow, in a ſailor's dreſs, generally accompanied her: his looks were characterised with unmingled ferocity.

"Sometimes other men came with her. She and they generally drank together, and then retired.

" There was ſomewhat of ſingularity, and an appearance of tawdry ornament, in this woman's dreſs, which led me to ſuppoſe ſhe was one of the unfortunate daughters of proſtitution which ſwarm in this city.

" I had obſerved her for more than a week, either paſſing to and fro, or ſitting in the kitchen, which as my mind became more habituated to this place, I entered frequently.

" One evening in particular, as I was croſſing the further end of the room where ſhe ſat, I overheard her exclaim to the man by her ſide, " This is he!—This is he!"—As I retraced my ſteps her countenance looked more terrible than ever, and there was a fearful glare in her eyes: the light of a ſolitary candle fell

on

on her left cheek and forehead; her companion was as nearly concealed in ſhade, however, I could juſt diſcern the workings of a ferocious deſperado. Their figures were ſuch as are never ſeen except in the haunts of misfortune, infamy, and deſperate guilt.

"This occurred on Friday: on the following Saturday and Sunday evenings the myſtery was diſcovered.

"I had retired to my chamber for the night, and was preparing for bed, when I obſerved a vivid line of light ſtream on the wall oppoſite to the place where I was ſtanding. I ſoon heard footſteps diſtinctly in a little parlour underneath my chamber, where a bed was placed for occaſional viſitors, and preſently the voices of two perſons—one of whom ſeemed to

be a man, and the other a woman. It ſeemed to me that I had heard their tones before; nor was it long before I recognized the accents of the man and woman, whom I had ſo often met in the kitchen.

I fancied I heard my name pronounced. This excited my attention, and I became careful to tread ſo lightly that no perſon in the adjoining apartment could hear me. As I had intended to go to bed immediately when I went up ſtairs, it being moon-light, I had taken no candle, and there had hitherto been ſo much buſtle below, that my footſteps could not have been heard.

"I now liſtened more attentively, and perceiving the crevice from whence the light came, I laid my ears to it, and

and caught diſtinctly the following words. "He looked at me—he knew me—I am "ſure he did: I will tell him all."— "Tell him, and go to the Devil," ſaid the fellow in a ſailor's dreſs, in a brutal tone of voice. "What ſhall I do then," rejoined the woman, "I cannot be worſe "off than I am; it were better to rot on "a gallows, and let the fowls fatten on "one's carcaſe, than lead ſuch a life as "this—but I will tell him: no change "can be for the worſe."

"The greater fool you," re-echoed the man; "why don't you ſee you have him "in your power? You may bring him to "your own terms, and make your for- "tune for life. Tell him forſooth, when, "it would but frighten him a little, you "might get bread and cheeſe enough for "the longeſt day you have to live."

"But how is this to be done, Richard? "though I have reaſon to hate his family, "*he* has done me no harm, and I wont "hurt a hair of his head I promiſe you. "I would have made the whole ſtory "known, long ago, but then you know "I muſt have ſuffered along with the "reſt—beſides, though the law of the "world is to get by foul means and fair "means, I hate the character of an In-"former."

"Well, but Meg, be adviſed by me; "get ſome neighbour to carry a note to "him, informing him that ſome one wants "to communicate a very particular ſe-"cret to him; leave the management of "the meeting to me: I will but juſt put "him in a little bodily fear, I will do him "no hurt—and you may truſt the man "who could murder ——"

"Don't

"Don't talk to me of your dark deeds,
"go on with your preſent buſineſs—what
"do you mean, Richard?"

"Why I and two other proper fellows
"(and I know plenty who would juſt like
"ſuch a job), after he is decoyed by the
"note to ſome lonely houſe, by providing
"ourſelves with arms, will threaten to
"murder him if he don't take his bible
"oath on hearing your tale to overlook
"your part in the buſineſs, and moreover
"not appear againſt you in Court, and
"provide handſomely for us (for we
"will pretend to be man and wife) for
"life."

"You don't know," rejoined the fe-
"male, whom you have to deal with:—
"he uſed to have a tender heart; and
"take my word for it, Richard, we ſhall

"get more from his generoſity than his "fears."

"A long altercation now enſued with regard to the ſuperior propriety of frightening me, or by informing me of the good news (for ſo they call this myſterious ſubject of their converſation), to induce me to be their friend.

"At laſt it was agreed between them, that I ſhould be acquainted, without any moleſtation, the next evening of the ſubject of their, as yet, unintelligible converſation.

"The candle was now put out, and the unknown perſons in the lower room were ſilent for the remainder of the night, As for myſelf I never cloſed my eyes; —now, my late misfortunes—now, the myſterious

myſterious ſtranger—now, the unaccountable converſation of this man and woman, haunted me; and till the morning light I was in a ſituation little removed from phrenſy. Towards ten o'clock I fell into a doſe, but the circumſtances I had lately met with, mingled in my ſlumbers, and I aroſe rather enfeebled than refreſhed.

"The next evening, ſoon after ſeven o'clock, my landlady came into the room, and informed me that a man and woman below wiſhed to ſpeak to me. From the diſcovery of laſt night, I gueſſed at the perſons I was going to meet. The ſpecimen I had already had of their character did not much diſpoſe me for this interview, and I deſcended the narrow and dark ſtairs with a foreboding heart.

"I was

"I was directed to the little parlour from whence the voices of the two perſons came the night before. The woman looked ſomewhat agitated as I entered—the man's countenance wore an appearance of exulting ferocity.

"This woman, Sir," ſaid he, "has "good news for you; but you muſt firſt "promiſe to be our friends, for Meg and "I are married."—

"What is it that you have to tell me," ſaid I, addreſſing the woman in a ſolemn tone of voice.—

"Is not," ſhe cried, "your name Oli-"ver, Sir?"

I anſwered, Yes.

"You

" You are the ſon of the late Mr. Roger Oliver of Glaſgow?"

My looks confirmed her queſtion.

" Do you remember Margaret Mc " Brair, who uſed to come twice a week " to your father's houſe with fruit and " vegetables?"

I pauſed for a moment, and looking at the woman ſaid, " You are not ſhe?"

" But do you remember her, Sir? " that was my queſtion."

" Yes, perfectly well."

" I am the perſon—look again at me; " are there no traces left of what I once " was?"

As

As ſhe ſaid this her countenance and manner expreſſed much agitation. I fancied that I ſaw ſomething of the woman before me, but it was the reſemblance of a ſpectre to the body it has left.

"Know then, Sir, that the will by "means of which——"

"Softly Meg," cried the fellow, "you "have not made the gentleman promiſe "not to appear in Court againſt you; "you are beginning at the wrong end."

"Silence, Richard, I care not for his "promiſes; let me have my revenge on "thoſe villains and I am ſatisfied."

"You are a damned fool, and if you "won't make Mr. Oliver promiſe to pro-"tect us, I will gag your mouth."

"Do

"Do this if you dare, Richard, I will "alarm the neighbourhood, and God "knows, if all were to come out, who "would be the beſt off—(ſaying this ſhe looked at him with a terrible ſignificance). "Get you gone, you villain," added ſhe, "I will tell my tale in my "own way."

"Go to hell for a ſimpleton," he cried, and muttering curſes on the woman, ſlunk out of the room.

She looked after him with a countenance of ferocious contempt, and then reſumed her tale.

"Know then, Sir, that the will, by "means of which your couſins came to "your father's property, was a forged "one."

I ſtarted

I ſtarted back, ſcarcely believing what I heard.

" It is true, Sir," continued the woman, " and I was privy to the vil-" lainy. I would tell it to the whole " world: good and evil, honour and " ſhame, are the ſame to me."

Her manner became wild and vehement.

" I was innocent, I was happy, and " that foul wretch rifled my boſom of its " treaſures; tempted me on to acts of " damnation;—and I have paſſed the " bounds of fear or ſuffering."

Foul villain! who? what do you mean?"

" Sit

"Sit down, Sir, and I will tell my "tale, and put you in poſſeſſion of a "ſecret, which may enable you to repair "your injuries."

She ſeated herſelf on one corner of the fire place: I placed myſelf on a ſmall bed on the oppoſite ſide of the room.

"I and one brother were the only chil- "dren of my father and mother. We "were brought up in the country, about "three miles from Glaſgow. Our child- "hood and youth were ſpent in innocence "and happineſs. Sandy Mc Brair, my "father, cultivated a few paternal acres, "and a large kitchen garden; my mother "kept a ſchool. By theſe means we "were comfortably ſupported. As I "grew up, my parents became infirm;

"the

"the employment of carrying the vege-
"tables of my father's garden, twice a
"week to the market at Glaſgow, de-
"volved upon me, and my brother un-
"dertook the management of our ſmall
"farm. Among the houſes which I re-
"gularly ſupplied with vegetables, your's
"was one.

"By this means I met with your
"couſins: the eldeſt of them ſoon diſco-
"vered a diſpoſition to ſhow me particu-
"lar attentions. I was then a ſilly un-
"ſuſpecting girl, and liſtened fondly to
"his fine ſpeeches, and believed all he
"ſaid. He offered me little preſents
"from time to time, and contrived as I re-
"turned home in the evening, to accom-
"pany me on my way, and thus, by de-
"grees, made himſelf completely maſter
"of my affections.

"At

" At this time Mr. Oliver was on his " death-bed. Your couſin promiſed " to marry me as ſoon as he was dead, " ſaying that as his uncle would leave " him ſome money, he ſhould be able to " ſupport me comfortably. Well, Sir, " with theſe aſſurances I ſuffered myſelf " to be ſatisfied, and I yielded my per- " ſon to the gratification of his deſires.

" I ſoon by hints and half-ſentences " diſcovered that what he had told me of " expectations from his uncle was all a " lie; and he now talked of forging, in " concert with his brother, a will, by " means of which they were to gain the " whole of their uncle's property into " their hands.

" His jealous nature—his alienation " from his children—the character of his

" wife,

" wife, and the indifferent terms upon
" which ſhe and Mr. Oliver lived, they
" knew would give a colour of plauſi-
" bility to the tranſaction.—This was en-
" truſted to me in a moment of ungrati-
" fied tenderneſs, when I was upbraiding
" him with the loſs of my innocence, and
" with his palpable delays in acknow-
" ledging me as his wife.

" He perſuaded me to connive at the
" ſcheme, by repreſenting it as the only
" method of ſecuring my reputation, al-
" leging that in caſe this method of forg-
" ing a will were not adopted, he ſhould
" have no fortune, and in conſequence
" could not afford to marry. I ſuſpected
" that I was pregnant. I knew that if
" my ſituation were diſcovered my pa-
" rents and brother would caſt me off.

" I was

" I was thus, Sir, ſeduced to be a part-
" ner in the action.

" Your father died—the will was pro-
" duced; you were out of the way;—
" your brother was in Ireland on a viſit;
" your mother was too feeble to make
" any oppoſition; every paper that
" might lead to a diſcovery was de-
" ſtroyed; and your couſins came into
" the quiet poſſeſſion of Mr. Oliver's
" wealth.

" But what was my ſurpriſe and indig-
" nation when I found that my ſeducer
" ſtill made excuſes, and procraſtinated,
" from time to time, when I entreated
" him to think of our marriage.

" My pregnancy could no longer be
" concealed: I ſtill doated, even to diſ-
" traction,

" traction, on the villain who had undone
" me; and contrived to meet him fre-
" quently in ſecret. When my ſhame
" was diſcovered, I was thruſt out of my
" father's dwelling. I went to my ſedu-
" cer's; his doors were ſhut againſt me,
" and what, Sir, was worſt of all, he had
" bribed another man to ſwear that he
" was the father of my unborn infant;
" and there was no alternative for me,
" but either to live with this man, or
" periſh with cold and hunger.

" He who had effected my ruin had
" agreed with this fellow, that I ſhould
" live with him as his wife or miſtreſs;
" but that he in ſecret ſhould have ad-
" miſſion to my perſon.

" Imagine to yourſelf, Sir, what muſt
" have been the horrible ſtate of my
" mind,

" mind, when I ſaw the only perſon on
" earth I had ever loved ſteal to my
" lodgings, under ſuch a maſk of deteſ-
" table villainy. I fell ſenſeleſs at his
" feet, and kept my bed in a violent
" fever for many weeks. When I reco-
" vered I refuſed to ſee the wretch any
" more; and, as a meaſure of immedi-
" ate ſubſiſtence, yielded to the ſolici-
" tations of my mercenary keeper: he
" was more bearable to me than the
" other—and to die of want I was not
" yet prepared.

" One of the firſt pieces of informa-
" tion that I heard after my recovery
" was the deceaſe of my father and mo-
" ther; they had died of a broken heart.

" My brother was a ſtern man, and it
" was out of the queſtion to hope any thing
" from

" from him. In a ſhort time after this " I was delivered of a child, which died " in a few days; but my miſeries termi- " nated not here, for I was ſummoned " before the magiſtrates as a diſorderly " perſon, and obliged to perform public " penance in the High Church of Glaſ- " gow.

" While ſtanding before the miniſter, " expoſed to the inſulting remarks and " taunting looks of the congregation, on " lifting my eyes which had hitherto been " fixed on the ground, I perceived your " couſin, with a lady much older than " himſelf, whom he had lately married " for her wealth, arrayed in all the pomp " of dreſs, and compoſing their coun- " tenances to the ſolemnity of hypocri- " tical devotion. I felt my ſpirit riſe " within me, and I caſt on him a look

" full

" full of indignation—he affected not
" to perceive me—the effort had been
" too much for me, and, ere the ſervice
" was over, I ſank ſenſeleſs in the aiſle
" of the church.

" From that time my character being
" publicly branded with infamy, all the
" hopes which actuate human nature
" were gone for ever—deſtitute, un-
" friended, houſeleſs, and ſunk to the
" loweſt ebb of degradation, I yielded
" to the preſſures of misfortunes, and
" gradually hardened myſelf to ſyſtema-
" tic proſtitution.—The chain of events
" ſubſequent to this time, which led me
" to quit Scotland, cannot intereſt you
" in the narration—all that it con-
" cerns you to hear I have confeſſed—
" I am become the outcaſt of ſociety,

"it is true—but ſociety has made me
"what I am—and I glory in any occa-
"ſion of preying on its vitals.

"Further misfortunes I cannot meet
"with—my ſoul is ſeared by calamity.—
"I care not for the reproaches and
"curſes of a whole nation;—even an ig-
"nominious death would have no terrors
"for me!"

Her manner, as ſhe concluded her narrative, became impetuous, and menacing, and her voice hollow and deſperate.

I ſat for ſome time dumb and ſtupid with amazement; at laſt I thus addreſſed her:—

"What you have related has much
"aſtoniſhed and confounded me,—but
"you

" you will not find in me a man who will
" revenge paſt injuries—while there are
" any materials left, as there always are ſo
" long as life laſts, I deem capital puniſh-
" ments criminal—I ſhall not obtain a
" fortune even by the downfal of villainy
" and injuſtice.—I thank you for your
" good intentions towards me—your tale
" has deeply inſtructed me in the turpi-
" tude of the human heart.

" My couſins are ſafe.—I never will
" be an inſtrument of evil to any man.—
" Vengeance belongs not to the arm of
" fleſh,—I leave them, therefore, in the
" quiet poſſeſſion of their ill-gotten
" wealth, to God, and their own con-
" ſciences."

The woman was ſtupified at my an-
ſwer—ſhe looked at me, as at a being

not human—my conduct ſeemed to her to have all the unnaturalneſs of inſanity.

She was ſilent for a long time, but at laſt exclaimed,

"Are you ſerious, Sir."—I replied, "Yes," with a tone of voice and ſteadineſs of manner that would no longer permit her to doubt.—She ſeemed agitated, and in a few ſeconds broke forth, "Oh! that I had earlier known that "ſuch a man lived."

Saying this, ſhe ruſhed out of the room, and was beyond my reach, ere I had time to reſtrain her.

"*Tuesday.*

" *Tuesday.*

" Upon examining my pocket I find that I have not enough money to pay my bill.—Good God! to what ſhall I betake myſelf—the emotions with which I came here were ſo ſtrong, that I never troubled myſelf reſpecting the means of my ſubſiſtence—all that I wiſhed for was a place where I might ſhelter my head, and ſtill be inviſible to every being that I know. I have at all times a ſtrange dreamineſs about me which makes me indifferent to the future, if I can by any means fill the preſent with ſenſations—with that dreamineſs I have gone on here from day to day; if at any time thought troubled, I have ſwallowed ſome ſpirits, or had recourſe to my laudanum—beſides, ſo fantaſtic have been the adventures which have happened to me ſince I left

my brother's, that they have wholly prevented me from looking in upon myſelf, and contemplating my own mind, or from dwelling on the exigencies of my ſituation, and the claims of others.—No, I have ſuffered myſelf to be carried on by a tide of inexplicable feelings—and ſo it muſt ſtill be.—Thought is madneſs to me—my principles are afloat—I remember them a brief while, and then they fail me,—but, oh God! reaſon is inadmiſſible in a boſom ſo troubled as mine.

"Charles!—thou who haſt taught me to reflect—thou who once didſt ſnatch me from deſtruction—thou who ſhowedſt me a ſtraight path when all was dark and obſtructed—wilt thou ever again be the miniſter of comfort to thy friend?—I cannot write to thee—I think of thee too intenſely.—I could weep in thy boſom

ſom—graſp thy hand—feed upon thy countenance—but I cannot write!—Reaſon is gone from me;—I am fallen too low to be thy friend—where will theſe agonies end?—I will drown them with a pipe and ſome grog—any thing that will ſtupify and corporealize my feelings, is better than this gnawing of my heart.——

"What idiocy there is in that laugh!—they are very merry below—I hear my landlord's voice—the voice of mirth to me now is like the howlings of the damned.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

[The narrative again breaks off ſeven days, till the following Monday.]

"I will

—" I will!—I will!—I cannot leave the houſe thus in debt—the man's offer ſhall be accepted—Yes—I will become a murderer—a moral, legal murderer! —But am I ſuch a villain?—have my principles ſo deſerted me?—Now that was well done,—Reaſon, reaſon, fool—madman that thou art!—reaſon now that thou haſt renounced virtue for ever—reaſon, when that reaſon but ſhews thee how irretrievably thou art loſt—What? ſhall the damned talk of fitneſs and virtue, and with voluntary perceptions of moral beauty ſharpen, and add new anguiſh to their torture?—No—no—no—the ſpirit, that is ſold to vice and miſery, would do better to forget what virtue and happineſs are!

" That man has won me, and I am undone for ever. * * * * * * *

" I have

"I have anſwered the note, informing him of my compliance—and to morrow for the buſineſs."

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Now, my Rebecca, how will you bear this melancholy journal—it has almoſt burſt my heart-ſtrings.—Poor Oliver!—he loved me to the laſt.—Oh that I had met him ere he made the raſh, the fatal reſolve!

I can write no more now.—This narrative has been too much for me.

God bleſs my Rebecca, and my little ones.

CHARLES MAURICE.

P. S. I ſtill hear frequently from Miſs Oliver.—She is in a moſt diſtreſſed ſtate of mind.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVIII.

CHARLES MAURICE
TO
MRS. MAURICE.

London.

MY DEAR REBECCA,

LADY Gertrude ſtill continues as ill as ever. I have not been in her apartment ſince the diſcovery of Oliver's narrative, which you know I met with this day week.—I intend to wait the termination of her diſeaſe; it is of too violent a nature to laſt much longer, without a deciſive alteration.

Can you underſtand that myſterious ſtranger's character who viſited Oliver?—He is to me utterly incomprehenſible. In ſhort,

ſhort, Rebecca, is it not poſſible that it ſhould be D'Oyley in diſguiſe?—One ſurpriſe and misfortune has trodden ſo cloſely upon the heels of another, ſince I have been in town, that I am altogether unable to think calmly.—We will talk of theſe things by our fire-ſide.

That Edmund has fallen in a duel with D'Oyley, there can be no doubt;—that letter of Gertrude's—the paragraph in the paper—D'Oyley's diſappearance—Gertrude's black dreſs—and above all, the concluding paſſages of his narration, in which he delineates the wavering ſtate of his mind, and ſhudders at the idea of murder, ſufficiently confirm the melancholy truth.

Yet, Rebecca, I wiſh to hear the circumſtance from Gertrude's mouth: I ſhall

ſhall therefore ſtay here till ſome alteration takes place in her diſorder—beſides, ſhe is now companionleſs and ſolitary; and as ſhe hinted that ſhe might want a friend, it ſeems to me a moſt ſerious duty to remain here.

My dear Rebecca, farewell,

CHARLES MAURICE.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.